SINGING THE FAITH

Soundings of Lyrical Theology in the Methodist Tradition

PAUL WESLEY CHILCOTE

Singing the Faith: Soundings of Lyrical Theology in the Methodist Tradition

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Singing the Faith: Soundings of Lyrical Theology in the Methodist Tradition

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For two new grandsons in our family,
Oliver Wesley Glass and Theo Jonathan Brooks,
who are already avid singers

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Preface

In 2017 my book *A Faith That Sings: Biblical Themes in the Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley* received the Saddlebag Award from the Historical Society of The United Methodist Church. This award is given for the outstanding book on United Methodist history or a related subject published during the previous calendar year. That book is included in the Wesleyan Doctrine Series, which "seeks to reintroduce Christians in the Wesleyan tradition to the beauty of doctrine." In that earlier volume I attempted to articulate the theology sung by countless early Methodists through Wesley's hymns. In a tradition frequently described as "born in song," it seemed to make sense to explore the salient theological themes proclaimed in the hymns of this unsurpassed lyricist. This exercise confirmed many of my own conclusions about Wesleyan theology but also revealed new insights about a theology that is sung.

While I was working on that project, the idea surfaced in my mind to produce a parallel volume examining the compositions of Methodist lyricists since the time of Charles Wesley and to explore the theology embedded in their hymns and songs. I thought that such a book might serve well as a parallel to Thomas Langford's long-standing classic, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition*. Using a fairly straightforward chronological methodology, Langford examined the theology of great Methodist figures such as Richard Watson and Borden Parker Bowne, Mildred Bangs Wynkoop and Georgia Harkness, James Cone and José Miguez Bonino. But we know the theology of Methodist people has been shaped by the songs they have sung as well as the books they have read and the sermons they have heard. This fact begs the question, who are some of the significant Methodist lyricists who have shaped the theology of those who sing their songs? How has this sung theology changed over the years? What are the patterns and permutations

of this lyrical theology? My feeling is that these song writers and their songs are just as significant as the major theologians who have shaped Methodist discourse for nearly three centuries. And so, this volume seeks to enrich our theological understanding by listening to these voices as well.

I am not a hymnologist like a Michael Hawn or Martin Clarke, someone who has studied and has a broad knowledge of songs in all their various forms. Neither do I possess anything approaching the breadth of their knowledge related to hymnals or hymn collections. I am neither a poet nor a serious student of poetry like a Richard Watson or Frank Baker, someone who has mastered the art and craft of lyrical expression. I have never written a hymn or given serious attention to the literary qualities of lyrical material. Nor am I a musician like an S T Kimbrough Jr. or Jeremy Begbie, someone who possesses a sophisticated understanding of the musical aspects of hymns and songs in terms of their genres, structures, or styles. Moreover, I am not a Carlton Young, someone who has mastered all of these areas. I am an historical theologian who loves to sing the songs of faith and who has a passionate interest in how the singing of the community of faith both expresses and shapes theology. Because of my engagement in and love for many different forms of sacred song, I am constantly reminded about the complexity and multifaceted phenomenon of lyrical theology.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to a multitude of friends, scholars, and practitioners who have provided assistance in this project. I am particularly thankful for six dear friends and colleagues who helped bring focus to this volume conceptually. This was a difficult task, given the nascent character of this kind of study and the complexity of the lyrical/theological interface. So my heartfelt gratitude to Ron Anderson, Elise Eslinger, S T Kimbrough Jr., Ed Phillips, Lester Ruth, and Karen Westerfield Tucker in particular for their front-end heavy lifting. I own the faults in the design and methodology and any of my failures to heed their good advice.

With regard to the evolution of this book, Taylor Burton-Edwards, Randy Maddox, Jonathan Powers, Don Saliers, and John Witvliet provided helpful guidance. For those Methodists who are currently engaged in the practice of creating sacred texts, I have wanted them to represent themselves as much as possible in this work. So the opportunity to enrich long-standing relationships and

to develop new ones with Tomas Boström, Constance Cherry, Dan Damon, Hartmut Handt, Swee Hong Lim, Jorge Lockward, I-to Loh, Patrick Matsikenyiri, Simei Monteiro, George Mulrain, Andrew Pratt, Pablo Sosa, and John Thornburg have been life-giving to me throughout this experience. Their creative energy astounds me; I thank them for who they are and what they continue to produce in praise of God.

Much of the basic research for this book depended heavily upon InterLibrary Loan, so many thanks to the staff at Asbury Theological Seminary for their excellent service, as well as the many libraries that fulfilled my requests. Kathy Armistead has been a great friend for many years. Not only did she and her colleague Jennifer Manley Rogers welcome the proposal for this book with open arms, but they have supported me in this project with great generosity. My daughter, Rebekah, provided copy editing services on this volume as she has on others I have written. She has a good eye and good sense, so some of the credit for this book goes to her with my thanks.

While I was preparing the manuscript of this book, the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris fell prey to the ravages of fire on April 15, 2019. As I sat at my computer writing, I kept an eye on the TV screen in the distance. The tragedy is still incomprehensible. But as darkness fell and the crowds swelled in the vicinity of the cathedral, those who gathered began to sing hymns. In the midst of this great loss God's people expressed their lament and bolstered their faith in song. This reflects the power of singing and the way our singing embodies our faith.

P.W.C.
May 21, 2019
Anniversary of Charles Wesley's Awakening of Faith

Introduction

Ever since I learned the origin of Samuel Clemens's *nom de plume*, Mark Twain, I've been fascinated with "soundings." This is the term used for the way in which the depth of water was determined on the treacherous Mississippi River. A sounding chanter at the bow of the boat threw his weighted line into the water and then sang out the depth to the pilot so he could safely navigate the difficult stretches of the river. This name that Clemens adopted literally means the "second mark." This was the mark on the line measuring a depth of two fathoms—twelve feet—a safe depth for a Mississippi steamboat. The subtitle of this book, "Soundings of Lyrical Theology in the Methodist Tradition," plays with this image. What is the quality or depth of theology at any given point in the history of Methodist song? Where are the deep points in the various theological streams of Methodism that have shaped the singers? What are the themes and characteristics of a Methodist sung theology? How does what we sing shape our faith, and how does our faith shape what we sing? These are the kinds of questions I explore in this book on "Singing the Faith."

Some of the terms related to this study, such as *hymnology* (literally "words about hymns") and *theology* (literally "words about God") are unbelievably complex. On one hand, it would be easy to overcomplicate the primary terms in the title of this book—"lyrical theology" and "Methodist tradition"—on the other hand, to think that they are easily defined would be a serious mistake. Nonetheless, I do not want this book to be complicated. Like John Wesley, I am more concerned about plain words for plain people and am particularly interested in helping the disciple of Jesus in the Methodist tradition reflect more fully on the theological significance of the words we sing and how and why we sing them. To that end, let me share some thoughts about the relationship between sacred song and theology, the interface of lyrical theology and the Methodist tradition,

and a proposed taxonomy or classification of lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition.

Sacred Song and Theology

"What people really believe down deep," writes hymnologist Hugh McElrath, "is often embedded in the words of the hymns they have known and loved because of repeated meaningful experiences in singing them."[1] Fundamentally, hymns are theological speech. It may even be right to think about "sung theology" as something more closely approaching the original meaning of the Greek word *theologia* from which the English word is derived. The earliest Christian theology, claims Louis Bouyer, "designates a hymn, a glorification of God by the logos [word], by thought. This thought is obviously rational in the way harmony is: it is an intellectual music whose spontaneous expression is therefore a liturgical chant and not some sort of hair-splitting or tedious labeling."[2] Scripture links speaking and singing very closely. In *The Magician's Nephew* C. S. Lewis actually has Aslan (his figure for Christ) sing the universe into existence through one great creative act of song. Could it be that singing is our original theological language? And if this is the case, then hymns and songs relocate theology in a space that fits us more comfortably than we might otherwise imagine.

As someone who deeply appreciates both singing and theology, I find the insight of my friend Karen Westerfield Tucker to be extremely helpful in this regard:

> The singing of doctrine truly allows for the embodiment of belief. Because of the physical mechanisms required for singing, sung confession and praise necessarily engage the whole person: assent to God's truths is not only of the mind and lips, but is drawn from the very breath—the breath of the spirit and of the Spirit—that supports life. The breath that animates the individual body is also the breath that

1 Hugh T. McElrath, "The Hymnbook as a Compendium of Theology," *Review and Expositor* 87 (1990): 11.

2 Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist: The Theology and Spirituality of the Eucharistic Prayer*, trans. Charles U. Quinn (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), 5.

sustains the body of Christ, the Church, and that allows the congregation to sing with one voice.[3]

This connection between singing and theology is nothing new, of course. If we define theology quite simply as what we believe about God, then we immediately intuit how the songs we sing perform that theology. "Our favorite songs, and those which we best remember, are the ones expressing the deepest feelings of our hearts," claims Tom Colvin, echoing McElrath. "They shout out our *feelings* about what we *believe* about God."[4] "The songs of the people," proclaims Per Harling, "are the theology of the people"[5] What we sing shapes our theology; our theology shapes what we sing.

Scripture itself bears witness to the connection between theology and sacred song in the community of faith from the Psalms to the hymn texts embedded in the narratives of the New Testament.[6] One of the earliest Christian songs, quoted by St. Paul in Philippians 2:5-11, for example, articulates a particular theological vision of Jesus, his character and significance. Martin Luther, as part of his reforming efforts, revived interest in congregational singing and the use of hymns to teach Christian doctrine. "In the chorale," Carlton Young observes, "he joined *doxa* (praise) and *dogma* (belief)."[7] Songs, in fact, have been the primary means by which most reformations in Christian history were ignited and spread. Hymns and songs have communicated new theological discoveries and rediscoveries in every generation. In her discussion of how song forms the identity of individuals and communities, Gertrud Tönsing confesses that the hymnal in her Lutheran tradition is a "close

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3 Karen Westerfield Tucker, "*Lex Credendi, Lex Canendi*: Noting the Faith of the Church," in *Ecumenical Theology in Worship, Doctrine and Life*, ed. D. S. Cunningham et al (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 53.

4 Thomas S. Colvin, "Global Song and Theology: Content," in *Music & Mission: Towards a Theology and Practice of Global Song*, ed. S T Kimbrough Jr. (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, 2006), 53.

5 Per Harling, "Global Song and Theology: Background and Context," in *Music & Mission*, ed. Kimbrough, 74–75.

6 See Jeffrey P. Greenman and George R. Sumner, *Unwearied Praise: Exploring Christian Faith Through Classic Hymns* (Toronto: Clements Publishing, 2004).

7 Carlton R. Young, *Companion to The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 7.

second" to the Bible as a shaper of faith.[8] The noted Charles Wesley scholar J. Ernest Rattenbury carried a jointly bound copy of Wesley's hymns and the Bible everywhere he went. When St. Augustine made the claim that to sing is to pray twice, he was bearing witness to the fact that Christians define themselves and their theologies, not simply on the basis of how they think, but by the forms and language they use to praise in song the One they love.

In the current rediscovery of this conversation, William Dyrness has expanded the vision of a poetic theology (*theologia poetica*), including the relationship between sacred song and theology.[9] Jeremy Begbie, in the much-heralded book *Resounding Truth*, maintains that poetry expresses theology potently, but announcing and performing faith in a different voice. He argues the ancient conviction that art, in its multifarious forms, must be recognized as a genuine theological text.[10] Geoffrey Wainwright's earlier work on "the place of hymns" in his single-volume systematic theology, *Doxology*, provides a helpful description of the relationship between theology and hymns.[11] He describes three aspirational motifs in this regard: the doctrinal, the existential, and the fusion of poetry and piety. First, hymns have the capacity to communicate the major truths of the gospel. Second, hymns can assist Christian disciples in terms of growth in grace and the realization of God's rule. Third, hymns, more than any other form of theology, can express the tension that exists between the heart/mind and life/voice—the aspiration to live and perform in everyday

8 Gertrud Tönsing, "'Forming identity through Song': How our songs in worship shape our theological identity: A study of Lutheran hymns and how they shaped German descendent Lutheran congregations," *Theological Studies* 69, 1 (2013): 1–11.

9 William A. Dyrness, *Poetic Theology: God and the Poetics of Everyday Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2010).

10 Jeremy S. Begbie, *Resounding Truth: Christian Wisdom in the World of Music* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007); cf. *Beholding the Glory: Incarnation through the Arts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2000); *Voicing Creation's Praise: Towards a Theology of the Arts* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2000); and, with Steven R. Guthrie, *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2011).

11 Geoffrey Wainwright, *Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 198–205.

life that which we confess and believe in heart and mind. Begbie goes so far as to claim that "music—in, with, and through language—is capable of enabling a fuller participation in the realities which that language mediates and in which all are caught up."[12]

The groundbreaking work of Jeff Astley, a pioneer at the University of Durham in what he calls "ordinary theology," identifies a three-stage model of learning religion: learning about religion, embracing the faith, and moving on in faith.[13] Hymns and sacred songs can be viewed as the links that connect these three stages. They not only shape faith but enable progress and movement toward a more intimate relationship with God. Not only do these texts as statements of doctrine and theology help people learn the faith, they also lead the seeker to a more personally meaningful experience of the truths the texts communicate. Astley's paradigm sounds strikingly similar to the ancient vision of Clement of Alexandria: "There seems to me to be a first kind of saving change from heathenism to faith, a second from faith to knowledge; and this latter, as it passes on into love, begins at once to establish a mutual friendship between that which knows and that which is known."[14]

In *The Faith We Sing*, a perceptive study about how hymns convey theological meaning and enhance Christian belief, Paul Schilling provides a compelling description of the theological importance of sung texts. His views can be summarized in five simple points:

1. The attainment of a sense of reality in worship requires understanding of the beliefs articulated in the hymns sung as well as in other parts of the liturgy.
2. Hymns provide a singularly appropriate medium for communicating the central meaning of the Christian life as the believer's response to God.
3. Theology, good, bad, or indifferent, is present in all hymns, making it important to identify just what we are upholding when we sing.

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12 Jeremy S. Begbie, *Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 207.

13 Jeff Astley, *Ordinary Theology: Looking, Listening and Learning Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 25–34.

14 Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis*, VII.10.57.4, in *A New Eusebius*, ed. J. Stevenson (London: SPCK, 1957), 200.

4. Precisely because hymns express religious convictions in a form used by large numbers of people, they are an indispensable vehicle for teaching Christian faith and life.
5. When they voice the gospel effectively, hymns play an important part in the church's evangelistic witness.[15]

For Schilling, this final concern points to the primary purpose of theology in the Methodist heritage, namely, transformation. He argues further that the importance of the hymns derives not only from the theological substance they carry but also from the manner in which they communicate this content. They advance theology through the cumulative power of repetition, the connection of ideas with emotion, and the use of imagery not readily accessible through literary prose alone.[16] Similarly, Michael Brown argues that the creative synthesis of music and lyrics in sacred songs casts visions "whose depth can never be exhausted through analytical investigation."[17]

In the process of singing the faith, we express and give shape to our theology, are challenged to transform our innermost beliefs into action, and lean forward expectantly from the present into the future. In *Sing with Understanding*, two significant hymnologists, Harry Eskew and Hugh McElrath, reflect succinctly on the essential purpose of sacred song:

> Here is the crux of the matter of the hymn as theology. No matter how precise and correct the theological teaching of a hymn may be, its doctrine remains frozen in moribund wording and lifeless musical notation until its meaning is devoutly embraced by the one who sings it. George Herbert in his poem "A True Hymn" has put it aptly:
>
> > The fineness which a hymn or psalm affords
> > Is when the soul unto the lines accords.[18]

15 S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 23–25.

16 Schilling, *The Faith We Sing*, 26–28.

17 Michael Joseph Brown, "I'm Going to Live the Life I Sing about in My Song," in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship,* vol. 2, ed. James Abbington (Chicago: GIA Pub., 2014), 192.

18 Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 71.

Lyrical Theology and Methodist Tradition

The overarching terms "lyrical theology" and "Methodist tradition" require definition for the sake of clarity and integrity in this study. But I must first define some of the simpler terms used throughout. I am working from the presupposition that definitions claiming the least are often the best. As in many aspects of life, less is more. For the purposes of this volume, then, I define "theology" quite simply as "what we believe about God." The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada has an elaborate definition of "hymn," but its research committee concluded "for a working definition, the hymn may be regarded as a congregational song."[19] So that is simply what "hymn" means here; it is synonymous, therefore, with "song." The term "lyrical" comes from the Latin word *lyricus*, literally meaning "for the lyre." So "lyric" or "lyrical" means "words fit to be sung." Whenever I use this term, I refer to the words—text—and not the musical setting of a hymn.

Given the simplicity of these definitions, it should be evident that some words can and are used interchangeably, as in the case of hymn and song. But there are conventional uses of these terms, and I do adhere to these as much as possible. In particular, when I discuss "classic hymns," I use the term "hymn" rather than "song" to maintain clarity. And when exploring "gospel songs," I speak of them as songs rather than hymns, despite the fact that both terms can be found in the literature. Likewise with regard to the social gospel hymn, since the "style" of this genre leans more in the direction of the classic hymn. The term "black gospel music" represents something of an anomaly. This language, originally meant to distinguish this genre from gospel songs or hymns, refers both to the music and the texts of these songs and not to the music only.

Lyrical Theology

The term "lyrical theology" has been in use now for nearly half a century, but it is still somewhat new to many people. No one in recent years has advanced the study and shaped the discipline of lyrical theology more than S T Kimbrough Jr. In 1984 Kimbrough coined the term in reference to Charles Wesley. In his earliest writings that

19 *The Hymn* 29 (January 1978): 37.

deal with the interrelation of sacred song and theology, he defined "lyrical theology" quite simply as "sung theology." In successive essays on this theme, reprinted in adapted form in *The Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley*, Kimbrough refined the concept, defining it as "a theology couched in poetry, song, and liturgy, characterized by rhythm and expressive of emotion and sentiment."[20] He explores lyrical theology as both doxology and reflection—as both words to God and words about God. With regard to Charles Wesley, Kimbrough argues that the hymn writer created "a vibrant, lyrical theological memory individually and corporately for Christians and the church as a whole."[21] What he has said about Charles Wesley, in particular, also can be said about other Methodist lyricists. The extent of their influence may not be as wide, but they have done or are doing precisely the same thing—creating a theological memory through song.

Kimbrough identifies seven primary aspects of lyrical theology, gleaned from a close study of the Psalms.[22]

1. Lyrical theology is world-making. Building on the insights of Walter Brueggemann, he maintains that the Psalms of the Hebrew scriptures call the community of faith to a new social reality. In this new world created in song, justice prevails, love liberates the oppressed, and peace reigns.
2. Lyrical theology is a theology of sound. Since this form of theology is not just "thought," but is experienced in our senses, it elicits response.
3. Lyrical theology has the ability to appropriate itself to us where we are. Sacred song has a timeless quality that is not bound by time and space. The song meets us where we are, so to speak, and engages the community in the present moment.
4. Lyrical theology does not seek to impart information to be turned into articles of orthodox belief; rather, it enables us

20 S T Kimbrough Jr., *The Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley: A Reader* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 3. Cf. his earlier essay, "Hymns Are Theology," *Theology Today* 42, 1 (April 1985): 59–68 and a more recent study, "Charles Wesley's Dynamic, Lyrical Theology: The Power and Impact of Verbs," *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* 11 (2006–2007): 15–34.

21 Kimbrough, *Lyrical Theology*, 72.

22 Kimbrough, *Lyrical Theology*, 13–22.

to hold the paradoxes and inconsistencies of life in balance. It has the power, in other words, to transform thought into action—to reorient or resituate our lives.

5. Lyrical theology emanates from a life of prayer. Sacred songs, like the Psalms, are often couched in the language of prayer. We not only sing about God; we sing to God as well.
6. Lyrical theology evokes a life of service. The German word for "worship" (*Gottesdienst*) literally means "God's service." This begs the question as to whether God serves the community or the community serves God. And the answer is "yes." Praise in song leads to service to God, others, and creation.
7. Lyrical theology mandates proclamation. Hymns and sacred songs call the community of faith to proclaim what God has done and to make that known from generation to generation.

Kimbrough also provides extremely helpful guidance in terms of how to navigate lyrical theology by means of six observations:

> First of all, insofar as possible, one must consider the author's intent as regards the theology transmitted through the hymn.
>
> Second, culture, ethnicity, language, life experience, and events play strong roles in the contextualization of the theological meaning of hymns.
>
> Third, the lyrical theology conveyed through a hymn/song may be determined in some measure by the liturgical or worship context.
>
> Fourth, the editing of hymn/song texts can change or shift the meaning of the theology they convey.
>
> Fifth, music and rhythm play distinct roles in the theology conveyed through hymns/songs.
>
> Sixth, one must move beyond the familiar to the theological challenges of other cultures and voices.[23]

Throughout this book I have attended in particular to Kimbrough's first, second, and sixth points. I carefully describe the critical biographical aspects and historical locations of the composers as well as their intentions. Issues related to the liturgical context of hymn singing, the ways in which texts have been changed

23 Kimbrough, *Lyrical Theology*, 34–41.

subsequently, and the musical aspects of the songs fall outside the scope of this study. While all these issues are important in lyrical theology, they simply are not the focus of this work. In the concluding chapters of the volume, then, I address Kimbrough's concern about our appreciation of diversity in a global church.

Methodist Tradition

Having examined the parameters of lyrical theology, what about "Methodist tradition," perhaps an even more problematic term? I mean by this, quite simply, those persons affiliated through their churches with the World Methodist Council. I make no effort in this volume to define the tradition beyond this; the term is meant simply to describe "people called Methodists" rather than to delineate a set of characteristics peculiar to Methodism. The term has a descriptive role in this book, in other words, and not an analytical one. One thing that does characterize all those who stand in this tradition, however, is a basic love of singing the faith.

Martin Clarke begins his discussion of authorized Methodist hymnals as expressions of doctrine and theology by alluding to prefatory comments in two of Methodism's most significant hymn collections in Great Britain.[24] In *A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists* (1780), John Wesley describes the *Collection* as "a little body of experimental and practical divinity." The compilers of *The Methodist Hymn Book* (1933) simply state, "Methodism was born in song." While Wesley's collection does not lay out a systematic Methodist theology, it does reveal the primary theological concerns of Wesleyan Christians, namely, all those matters revolving around salvation in a community of accountable disciples. The twentieth-century collection does not abandon the Methodist emphases, but it functions more as a resource for the whole life of the church, reflecting a much wider theological terrain. Clarke draws the following conclusion from his definitive study of British Methodist hymnody: "Hymns, then, are the most commonly encountered carriers of doctrinal and theological values and concepts in Methodism, and, as such, have contributed to the theological awareness of those who

24 Martin V. Clarke, *British Methodist Hymnody: Theology, Heritage, and Experience* (London: Routledge, 2017), 12.

have sung them, whether consciously or subconsciously."[25] Eric Baker illustrates this poignantly in the concluding chapter of his book on Methodist theology. After examining couplet by couplet Charles Wesley's brief hymn "Jesus, the first and last," he simply concludes: "[this hymn] sums up better than anything else I know what I believe to be the Faith of a Methodist."[26]

Baker may have been able to succinctly encapsulate British Methodist theology, to his own satisfaction, on the basis of a singular Wesley hymn text, but the complexities of congregational song make this much more difficult today. Just walking through the process of the composition and subsequent performance of a hymn illustrates the complex nature of these issues. Sometimes the author of a hymn text composes the music in an effort to wed text and tune. More often, however, hymns are composed with a tune in mind or are assigned tunes more arbitrarily. Lyricists do not select which texts and tunes are included in collections other than their own solo publications; this process, especially with regard to "authorized hymnals," is completely out of their hands and those of congregations as well. After hymn collections are published and distributed, pastors and musicians in local congregations determine what is sung and left unsung. For most people the tune determines the acceptance of a hymn; theological concerns tend to be secondary at best. Some hymns become popular and are used widely while others are quickly forgotten. Because of all these complexities related to congregational songs, I have found it important to develop a clear methodology related to this study in order to keep it focused and manageable.

Purpose and Methodology

For the purposes of this volume, therefore, I focus on three particular issues related to Methodist hymn writers and their texts that revolve around the following questions:

- Has the composition of a Methodist hymn/song writer stood the test of time? Many hymns examined here are included, for example, in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH), drawn from one or two centuries of common use.

25 Clarke, *British Methodist Hymnody*, 185.

26 Eric W. Baker, *The Faith of a Methodist* (London: Epworth Press, 1958), 112.

- Does the composition of a Methodist hymn/song writer give voice to particular theological concerns that arose within Methodism historically? Addressing this question necessarily entails a judgment in terms of significance and relevance.
- What compositions of Methodist hymn/song writers have emerged more recently as important expressions of emerging theological concerns? In some cases, texts in this category have not been sung enough to establish their strength to endure.

Having applied these criteria, I identified fifty-two Methodist composers of hymns and sacred songs who have contributed to lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition.

The diversity represented by these particular Methodist hymn writers is somewhat overwhelming. Twenty-eight are North American (all from the United States), including one British-born immigrant and one Anglo child born to Methodist missionaries in China. This preponderance of American lyrical composers demonstrates the dominance of this region with regard to Methodism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries prior to its global expansion. Moreover, given the impact of colonialism and the imposition of "Western forms" on Methodist converts in other parts of the world, it took some time before non-Western Methodists were permitted to discover their own voices in the creation of truly indigenous song in the twentieth century. Analyzing representatives from the historical periods, therefore, reveals that only six flourished in the first century of Methodism (1739–1839) and another six during the long nineteenth century (1840–1918). Fourteen were active during the early twentieth century as marked by their deaths between 1919 and 1991, a period sometimes referred to as the short twentieth century. But nearly half these Methodist lyricists (twenty-four) either died after 1991 or are still living today.

In terms of geographical distribution, nine hymn writers represent Europe, seven from Great Britain (including both Wesleys, of course) and one each from Germany and Sweden. Latin America and the Caribbean afford six song writers, two from Argentina and one each from Brazil, Jamaica, Mexico, and Trinidad and Tobago. Likewise, six come from Asian contexts, including one each from China, India, Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), and Taiwan. Song writers from Nigeria and Zimbabwe provide windows into the African

continent, and a New Zealander represents an Anglo perspective from Australasia. The song writers in this study include nine women and forty-one men. With regard to the sources of these hymns, two-thirds (thirty-five) come from Methodist hymnals or publications: *The United Methodist Hymnal* (twenty-five), *Global Praise I* (three), and one each from *Singing the Faith*, the General Board of Discipleship, *The Faith We Sing*, *Hymns and Songs*, *Von der Gnade singen*, *Hymns from the Four Winds*, and *Africa Praise Hymnbook*. The remainder have been drawn from either other denominational hymnals, solo collections, or other sources.

I have identified what I describe as a "signature text" for each composer, and I have gathered the full texts of these hymns/songs in the appendix to this volume. With regard to some hymn writers this was a simple exercise, either because of the limited number of hymns from which to choose or because of the clear stature of a singular text of their composition. With regard to others, attempting to "reduce" their contribution to a single text was excruciatingly difficult. The primary factors I considered in making these decisions included the way texts are described and associated with the authors in major hymnological repositories such as the *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, the nature of the commentary evoked by the hymns in secondary studies, and the illustrative quality of a text in relation to the central theological theme of the lyricist. I also gave opportunity for contemporary hymn writers to identify what they considered to be their most important texts.

From among these fifty-two Methodist creators of sacred song, in my judgment only four qualify for that rare classification, "lyrical theologian": Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby, Charles A. Tindley, and Fred Pratt Green. All the featured hymn writers in this volume engage in what I have described as lyrical theology. To classify as a lyrical theologian, however, as S T Kimbrough Jr. has argued, "someone must have a large enough corpus to make judgments about their contributions of lyrical theology to or within Methodism."[27] Among the four I have selected, Wesley, Crosby, and Green all produced a body of material that falls well into this criterion. Likewise, the continued use of their hymns qualifies them for this special designation.

27 Personal communication with the author on May 16, 2018.

Moreover, when you examine the substance of these writers' hymns, they have discernable theological trajectories that exemplify particular streams of Methodist lyrical theology, all of which are explored in the subsequent chapters. Defining the contribution of Tindley as a lyrical theologian requires a more difficult judgment call. His corpus is not as large as the other three, but its theological content is well defined and has shaped Methodism, in general, and the African American community, in particular, in remarkable ways. In all four cases, therefore, I feel justified in describing them as lyrical theologians in the Methodist tradition.

In this study, then, I focus my attention on the theology communicated through the texts of hymns and songs composed by these Methodist artists and shared in the common life of Christian congregations. The primary purpose of this book is to enrich your theological understanding and practice by listening to the voices of Methodist hymn writers who have both expressed and shaped theology. Secondarily, my hope is that this will help you, on a deeper personal level, to more fully understand how singing the faith has shaped your life and theology. Having laid out the methodology and purpose of this volume, I need to address just one more introductory element before we turn to the hymns and their authors. I have discerned a number of streams within the lyrical theology of Methodist hymn writers, and this taxonomy or classification will provide something of a guide as we explore this unfolding story of faith and song.

A Taxonomy of Methodist Lyrical Theology

In *New Songs of Celebration Render*, Michael Hawn describes seven streams that make up congregational song in the twenty-first century.[28] These include the Roman Catholic liturgical renewal song, classic contemporary Protestant hymnody, the African American congregational song, gospel and revival songs, folk hymnody, praise and worship music, and the ecumenical and global streams. I find this to be a helpful taxonomy from which to borrow for lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition. Methodist hymn and song writers cannot be categorized in all these streams. In fact, they fall rather

28 C. Michael Hawn, ed., *New Songs of Celebration Render: Congregational Song in the Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: GIA Pub., 2013), xxix–xxxiii.

neatly into five streams of my own construction with the obvious parallels to Hawn's classification: classic hymns, gospel and holiness songs, black gospel music, social gospel hymns, and global song. While hymns in the social gospel tradition tend to follow the same conventions and stylistic characteristics of the classic hymn, I consider them to be a unique stream by virtue of their historical location and content. These five streams emerged within Methodism chronologically but continue to constitute the primary sources of lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition today.

Charles Wesley, one of the greatest pioneers of congregational hymnody, and his brother John represent the **classic hymn stream** as do their successors in Britain who mimicked this form of sacred song with its strong emphasis on God's love and grace offered to all. Both deep and long, this stream stretches all the way from the Wesleys to Fred Pratt Green and beyond. A second stream feeding Methodist lyrical theology originated in the United States. It is almost possible to locate its headwaters in the southeastern region of the New Republic. Camp meeting songs composed by Methodists on the American frontier evolved into gospel songs emphasizing personal salvation and the centrality of Jesus and his redemptive work. Holiness songs then emerged as a new branch within this stream through their rediscovery of the Wesleyan emphasis on the experience of sanctification—holiness of heart and life. The songs of Fanny Crosby exemplify this slow, meandering stream of **gospel and holiness songs**, characterized by its warmth, simplicity, and popularity.

Black gospel music, while bathed initially in these warm waters, emerged as a distinct stream by virtue of location, culture, and history. Obstacles stood in the way of its waters and shaped the nature of this more dangerous stream—the rapids and waterfalls of oppression, life's trials, and the constant struggle against the current.[29] The compositions of Charles A. Tindley epitomize this third stream. Those who wrote **social gospel hymns**, to play with the stream image, represent the effort of Methodists to channel water in such a way as to distribute it more justly for the benefit of all humanity. A millstream, perhaps, whose flow is utilized to produce

29 See James I. Warren Jr., *O for a Thousand Tongues: The History, Nature, and Influence of Music in the Methodist Tradition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1988), 184–89.

flour so that all might have bread, characterizes this stream more fully. Finally, the stream of **global song** can be conceived as a river consisting of all these various elements flowing together. Here it is slow and meandering, warm and inviting; there it moves rapidly, simultaneously exhilarating and challenging. Some stretches of this river are deep and wide; where the shallows are constricted, rocky obstacles and barriers must be overcome.

No metaphor works perfectly, of course, but conceiving lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition in relation to these streams gives us a start. The water continues to flow. I hope that the soundings I have provided in this book help you navigate the river of Methodist song well. "Mark twain"—all ahead full.

1

Charles Wesley

Lyrical Theologian of Love Divine

Charles Wesley (1707–1788) co-founded Methodism as a movement of renewal within the Church of England.[1] Son of the Anglican clergyman Samuel Wesley and the incomparable Susanna, he developed a passion for both evangelical and sacramental revival in the church. Charles frequently led the way in many of the personal and institutional developments that characterized the religious awakening of the eighteenth century. He founded the so-called Holy Club while a student at Oxford University, a small group movement described later by brother John as the first rise of Methodism. His experience of God's unconditional love on May 21, 1738, in a way that transformed his life, preceded John's famous "Aldersgate Experience" by three days. Charles is remembered for many contributions to Methodism. But his most important legacy, without question, is a body of hymnody that continues to be celebrated, not only within Methodism, but in Christian traditions around the world. John Julian, the renowned hymnologist, considered him to

1 I have drawn heavily in this chapter upon my previous publication on the theology of Charles Wesley, *A Faith That Sings: Biblical Themes in the Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley*, Wesleyan Doctrine Series (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books), 2016.

be "the great hymn-writer of all ages."[2] The vast majority of people called Methodist learned their theology through singing his hymns. It is not too much to say that Methodism was born in the songs of this amazing hymn writer.

Charles Wesley's Literary Output

Wesley's literary output was stupendous. The definitive edition of his lyrical work approaches nearly 9,000 hymns and sacred poems. This body of poetic literature consists of some 4,400 distinctive hymns and sacred texts published during Charles's life, which scholarly consensus traces to his pen, and over 4,420 additional well-documented manuscripts that remained unpublished at this death.[3] To get some sense of proportion, this amounts to three times the literary output of William Wordsworth. Charles wrote, on average, ten lines of verse a day for fifty years, which translates into about 180 hymns per year between 1739 and 1788. And while not all this material excelled, the best of his work can hardly be surpassed. Variety, more than anything else, characterized this amazing corpus of hymns. They are composed in more poetic meters than any other hymn writer. They are filled with a staggering range of images, ideas, and metaphors. Despite the fact that Charles never composed any of the tunes to which his hymns were sung, here, too, variety reigned. In 1752 George Frideric Handel composed a tune, "Gopsal," for Charles's hymn "Rejoice, the Lord is King," for example; but the early Methodists sang hymns such as his "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast" to popular folk tunes such as "Nancy Dawson" as well.

Charles firmly rooted all his poetic creations in scripture. Words, phrases, and themes from the Bible, in fact, pervade his hymns. J. Ernest Rattenbury once quipped that if scripture were ever lost, it

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2 John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1985), 1257.

3 This definitive edition of Wesley's verse may be accessed through the website of The Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, Duke Divinity School, and includes both the published and manuscript poetry of Charles Wesley in its entirety. All hymn texts in this chapter are taken from this site, with grateful acknowledgment to Randy and Aileen Maddox, in particular; https://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives/cswt/charles-published-verse.

could be reconstituted through Charles's hymns. Frank Baker likened his verse to "an enormous sponge, filled to saturation with Bible words, Bible similes, Bible metaphors, Bible stories, Bible ideas."[4] In an examination of what I have described as Wesley's "credo hymns," he provides a scriptural title for nearly half the hymns in this select collection of hymns related to primary Christian beliefs.[5] One in four of these sacred songs comes from his two-volume *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* of 1762. Reflective in tone, the hymns of this collection often pick up a singular theological theme and, as Charles notes in the preface, reflect his attempt to defend the Wesleyan vision of perfect love. The biblical narrative, in fact, pervades Wesley's hymns and serves to shape the content of the singer's belief. Wesley addresses nearly every conceivable doctrine within the sphere of Christian theology. His poetic corpus constitutes a biblical, lyrical theology second to none in the English language.

This remarkable poetic gift began to blossom in 1739 with the advent of three successive editions of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, jointly published with Charles's brother. But several collections, in particular, demonstrate the way in which he engaged important theological concerns in his hymns. John Tyson has identified several of these publications as vehicles of "formal theology."[6] They include *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love* (1741 and 1742), defending the Methodist vision of salvation. *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (1745), 166 hymns comprised almost entirely of Charles's own texts, demonstrates the centrality of the Eucharist in Wesleyan spirituality. *Hymns on the Trinity* (1767) and his various festival hymn collections that expound central tenets of the Apostles' Creed—incarnation (*Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord*, 1745), resurrection (*Hymns for Our Lord's Resurrection*, 1746) and the ascension of Christ (*Hymns for Ascension Day*, 1746)—reflect his sturdy Anglican orthodoxy. Charles's most important achievement, perhaps, was *A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists*, published by John in 1780. For several generations this

4 Frank Baker, *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), xxv.

5 Paul W. Chilcote, "Charles Wesley's Lyrical Credo," *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* 15 (2011): 41–67.

6 John Tyson, "The Theology of Charles Wesley's Hymns," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 44, 2 (Fall 2009): 58–75.

hymn book provided the standard poetic explication of virtually every dimension of Methodist theology.

Charles's lyrical theology reflects the genius of a spirituality that united an Anglican purity of intent with the inward assurance of the Puritan heritage, all within the larger context of catholic Christianity and worked out in structures of accountable discipleship. His holistic vision of the Christian life linked warmhearted piety and servant ministry among the poor. The theology Charles articulated in verse reflects a thoroughly biblical, evangelical, and ecumenical vision of the Christian faith. One theme pervades this vast body of lyrical theology more than any other; these hymns are grounded in love: everlasting love; the new, best name of love; love divine. The concluding line of his famous hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" aptly describes the lyrical theology he and countless Methodists sang: "lost in wonder, love, and praise."

Charles Wesley as Lyrical Theologian

Perhaps no other hymn writer in the history of the church merits the description "lyrical theologian" more than Charles Wesley. To test his prodigious output by any standard leads to this conclusion. The size of his lyrical corpus provides more than enough material for a full spectrum of theological analysis. His hymns allude to and expound the entire breadth of scripture from Genesis to Revelation. He engages the fullest possible range of theological questions and topics, subjects that would fill the pages of any standard systematic theology. Despite this, it is surprising that relatively few studies have examined the topic of Charles Wesley as theologian. Scholars have scrutinized particular aspects of his theology, to be sure, but few students of Wesley have attempted an examination of his theology as a coherent whole or have sought to answer the question, what kind of theologian was Charles Wesley?

A quick survey of the books and articles that seek to address this issue reveals a variety of perspectives and characterizations of the hymn writer as theologian. It was not uncommon in the earlier stages of Wesleyan studies for some scholars to minimize Charles's contribution to the theology of the movement. Tom Langford somewhat epitomized this view, describing Charles as "a theologian in the same sense that anyone who thinks, sings, paints, or dances about God is

a theologian."[7] While he served a "supportive, encouraging, and propagandizing role" within the life of the movement, he was not a "creative theologian."[8] Others emphasized the experiential nature of his theology. J. Ernest Rattenbury, perhaps the most significant student of the Wesley corpus during the early twentieth century, described Charles as an "experimental theologian." In his monumental study of *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*,[9] in particular, he developed a portrait of his subject in this regard as a "popular theologian." John Tyson's preferred descriptive title for Wesley has been "praxis theologian," since Charles's fundamental concern, in his view, was how Christians live out their theology in the world.

Teresa Berger has argued, however, that Wesley was a "doxological theologian," whose theological statements *to* God were of equal value to the theological affirmations of formal theologians *about* God. She was one of the first to view Wesley as a creative, first-order theologian whose hymns were theological documents of critical importance in the development of the Wesleyan theological heritage. Similarly, Brian Beck confirms the theological weight of Charles's hymns in relation to the spiritual formation of the Methodist people. "We deceive ourselves," he maintains, "if we imagine that John Wesley's extensive theological writings were the decisive influence in the formation of the Methodist preachers or their hearers. . . . The words that lingered in the minds of the society members . . . were not snatches from [sermons or notes] . . . but [hymns]."[10] Ted Campbell imported a term from the Orthodox tradition to describe Charles as a theologian, characterizing him as *theologos*. This description, he argues, "allows us to claim more explicitly Charles Wesley's first-order work (*theologia prima*) of giving us words by which we can speak of God and indeed by which we can speak to God."[11]

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7 Thomas A. Langford, "Charles Wesley as Theologian," in *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, ed. S T Kimbrough Jr. (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1992), 99.

8 Langford, "Charles Wesley," 100.

9 J. Ernest Rattenbury, *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (London: Epworth Press, 1941).

10 Brian E. Beck, "Rattenbury Revisited: The Theology of Charles Wesley's Hymns," *Epworth Review* 26, 2 (April 1999): 72.

11 Ted Campbell, "Charles Wesley, *Theologos*," in Kimbrough, ed., *Charles Wesley*, 265.

In addition to the descriptions of Charles as experimental, practical, praxis and doxological theologian, and *theologos*, perhaps the most important recent characterization is that of Wesley as "lyrical theologian." In 1984 S T Kimbrough Jr. coined the term "lyrical theology" in reference to Charles Wesley. In three successive essays, all reprinted in adapted form in his book *The Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley: A Reader*, he refines the concept, defining it as "a theology couched in poetry, song, and liturgy, characterized by rhythm and expressive of emotion and sentiment."[12] He explores lyrical theology as both reflection and doxology—as both words about God and words to God. Some of Wesley's hymns demonstrate "his way of working through theological issues, thought, and concepts, and of shaping theological ideas" through a reflective poetic medium.[13] Charles also used hymns to reflect on the discursive theology of his brother and other theologians of the church. Through his poetic texts he created "a vibrant, lyrical theological memory individually and corporately for Christians and the church as a whole."[14] In addition, Charles expressed the doxological dimension of his theology, primarily in hymns composed for the purpose of worship and devotion. In these texts, according to Kimbrough, "he was seeking a continual offering of the human heart and life to God. Hence, the lyrical theology of doxology is multifaceted, multidimensional, and filled with diverse themes."[15]

Wesley's Central Theme of "Love Divine"

Given the scope and range of Wesley's lyrical output, determining the central emphases of his teaching presents a host of challenges. In *A Faith That Sings* I identify three themes that express the primary thrust of his theological vision, each of them related to grace and love. These constitute the superstructure of Charles's lyrical theology: the all-sufficiency of God's grace; holiness of heart and life; and God's pure, universal love. Without question, however, and parallel

12 S T Kimbrough Jr., *The Lyrical Theology of Charles Wesley: A Reader* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 3. Cf. S T Kimbrough Jr., "Charles Wesley's Dynamic, Lyrical Theology: The Power and Impact of Verbs," *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* 11 (2006-2007): 15–34.

13 Kimbrough, *Lyrical Theology*, 54.

14 Kimbrough, *Lyrical Theology*, 72.

15 Kimbrough, *Lyrical Theology*, 53.

perhaps to the great Pauline trilogy of faith, hope, and love, the greatest of these is love. "Love occurs," according to John Tyson, "more than fifteen-hundred times in Wesley's published hymns."[16] One of Charles's most popular hymns in the UMH (384), "**Love divine, all loves excelling**"—published in *Hymns for Those that Seek and Those that have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* in 1747—serves as the signature statement of this central theme.[17]

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
   joy of heaven, to earth come down;
   fix in us thy humble dwelling;
   all thy faithful mercies crown!
   Jesus, thou art all compassion,
   pure, unbounded love thou art;
   visit us with thy salvation;
   enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
   into every troubled breast!
   Let us all in thee inherit;
   let us find that second rest.
   Take away our bent to sinning;
   Alpha and Omega be;
   end of faith, as its beginning,
   set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
   let us all thy life receive;
   suddenly return and never,
   nevermore thy temples leave.
   Thee we would be always blessing,
   serve thee as thy hosts above,
   pray and praise thee without ceasing,
   glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
   pure and spotless let us be.

16 Tyson, "Theology of Charles Wesley's Hymns," 68.

17 [Charles Wesley], *Hymns for Those That Seek and Those That Have Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* [*Redemption Hymns*] (London: Strahan, 1747), 11–12.

Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

The Friend of sinners—who is also the King of glory, our Advocate, and the Victim/Victor who sheds his blood for us—embodies God's love. He puts flesh on what, for many, is an abstract idea. He transforms a noun into an action verb. Jesus incarnates the love of God in which all genuine love begins and ends. It would not be improper to say that, for Charles Wesley, life in Christ means to be swallowed up in the immensity of this love. The writer of 1 John makes the same point. In six verses he uses a form of the word "love" fifteen times. The grandeur of his insight and the majesty with which he develops the interwoven themes of God's love and our response to it by means of intense, loving (ethical) concern for others mitigate against all forms of sentimentality and shallowness. Wesley elevates us to the same heights in this eloquent and compelling prayer for a love-filled life.

First, Wesley acknowledges God as the source of pure, unbounded, extravagant love. This love enters human history in the person of Jesus Christ. "'Love,' God's *agape* or self-giving love," observes Tyson, "Charles Wesley viewed as both the motive behind the Christ event and the renewing power that pours into the Christian's life through Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit enters to form Jesus Christ within."[18] In Jesus we see how genuine love looks and how it behaves. Compassion defines God's life in the flesh. Wesley binds the image of the One who suffers with us in the first stanza to the universal quest of "every troubled breast" in the second. Our hearts are restless, claimed Augustine, until they find their rest in God. Wesley never deviates from a vision of liberation and redemption for all. Notice the plural, therefore, rather than singular, constructions in Wesley's hymn from beginning to end. We are *all* troubled, but in Christ *all* can find rest. In Wesley's original, God not only takes away "our bent to sinning," a typical modern rendition, but removes the "power of sinning," a force displaced by the capacity to love.

18 Tyson, "Theology of Charles Wesley's Hymns," 68.

In stanza three he elaborates this theme. Having expelled this power, the Spirit fills the believer with the fullness of God. The second line can be read actually in two different ways, perhaps an intended double entendre. "Let us all" expresses the possibility of universal redemption, while "all thy life" implies God's desire to make us totally Christlike, namely, as those in whom "all the fullness of God is pleased to dwell." Those conformed to the image of Christ in this life, claims Wesley, can be identified by their service, prayer, and praise.

In the final stanza the singer prays for God to continue this process of restoration, moving us closer and closer to maturity in Christ. Wesley defines this metamorphosis by the little word "till." We live in that time between what has been (what is no longer) and what will be (but is not yet). In this meantime God continues to change us from one degree of glory to another, conforming us to the image of Christ and sinking us deeper and deeper into love. Wesley brings us full circle, ending where he began in the acknowledgment that the God who is the ultimate mystery of our existence—"pure, unbounded love"—is also the one who invites us into the deepest possible fellowship in that love. Schubert Ogden, in a recently discovered address on the significance of this hymn, observes:

> So the point of our hymn's witness is existential: it is the assertion that the ultimate mystery whence we all come and whither we all return is neither an empty void nor a consuming enmity but a boundless love—the pure, unbounded love of which Jesus is the decisive re-presentation and in which he ever gives and calls us to place our faith.[19]

In other words, Wesley firmly believed that for those who experience God in this way as love, a reciprocal love forms in their hearts. They understand that their primary purpose in life is to live into this love by which and for which they have been created. It is not too much to say that, once Wesley had experienced the unconditional love of God in Christ for himself and developed a clear vision of his purpose in life as a child of God, he made the pursuit of this

19 Schubert Ogden, "'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling:' Some Theological Reflections on the Witness of a Hymn," *Methodist History* 56, 4 (July 2018): 240.

love or holiness his primary goal. "His subsequent spiritual life," as J. Ernest Rattenbury states so succinctly, "might be summed up compendiously in one phrase: 'a quest for love.'"[20] Perhaps no verses Charles Wesley penned ever expressed his passion about this quest more than the concluding stanzas of a hymn written soon after his poignant experience of God's love in May 1738:

> To love is all my wish,
> I only live for this:
> Grant me, Lord, my heart's desire,
> There by faith forever dwell:
> This I always will require
> Thee and only thee to feel.
>
> Thy power I pant to prove
> Rooted and fixed in love,
> Strengthened by thy Spirit's might,
> Wise to fathom things divine,
> What the length and breadth and height,
> What the depth of love like thine.
>
> Ah! Give me this to know
> With all thy saints below.
> Swells my soul to compass thee,
> Gasps in thee to live and move,
> Filled with all the deity,
> All immersed and lost in love![21]

Charles came to believe that no force in the universe is more powerful than love. Love is more powerful than hate. Love triumphs over evil. Love can conquer the disobedient heart. Love never coerces. Love never fails. Charles prayed consistently for God's love to fill his soul, and not his soul only, but the soul of every child of God.

His hymn "Against Hope, Believing in Hope," published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in 1740, celebrates the experience of divine love and the purifying work of the Holy Spirit—the way in which the children of God both know and feel God's love in their lives.

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20 Rattenbury, *Evangelical Doctrines*, 278.

21 John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: Strahan, 1739), 169.

Jesus, thine all-victorious love
Shed in my heart abroad;
Then shall my feet no longer rove,
Rooted and fixed in God.

O! that in me the sacred fire
Might now begin to glow;
Burn up the dross of base desire
And make the mountains flow!

Refining fire, go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul;
Scatter thy life through every part
And sanctify the whole.

My steadfast soul, from falling free,
Can now no longer move;
Jesus is all the world to me,
And all my heart is love.[22]

The love of God in the soul is like a fire that converts, softens, melts, pierces, breaks, glows, burns, consumes, refines, illuminates, fills, and sanctifies the whole person. Wesley's prayer is that all might experience this in life—that their quest might carry them home.

To return to the signature hymn "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling," Wesley prays for a love-filled life. Originally entitled "Thy Kingdom Come," no hymn, perhaps, has inspired more people to open their lives to the outpouring and infilling of God's love so that God's reign might be realized in the world. Since Jesus is "pure, unbounded love," when his Spirit takes full possession of our souls, we reflect the "pure and spotless" image of God's new creation in him. God, the source of all love, breathes the loving Spirit into every trembling heart when, in faith, we open our lives expectantly to Christ. Love liberates! It frees us to be the true children of the Lord of love.

The great hymn writer celebrates the effects of the indwelling Spirit of Love: she relieves trouble, secures rest, removes the desire to sin, and liberates the hearts of those who put their trust in Christ,

22 Charles Wesley, "Against Hope, Believing in Hope" in John and Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London: Strahan, 1740), 157–58.

the Alpha and Omega. The dominant theme of the Christian life is the desire never to be separated from the unconditional love we have come to know in Jesus; to serve, praise, and glory in this perfect love throughout eternity. The driving impulse of Wesley's vision of the Christian life is the fullest possible restoration of God's image in the life of every believer. Changed from glory into glory, the child of God falls prostrate before the Lord of all creation, "lost in wonder, love, and praise." Wesley's lofty vision to "be filled with all the fullness of God" is nothing other than a poetic paraphrase of the great collect he prayed before receiving the Holy Eucharist in the tradition of the *Book of Common Prayer*:

> Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may *perfectly love thee*, and worthily magnify thy holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.[23]

23 *The Book of Common Prayer* (New York: Church Publishing, 1928), 323. Emphasis added.

2

John Wesley

Translator of German Lyrical Theology

John Wesley (1703–1791) cast a lengthy shadow over his younger brother, despite the fact that Charles initiated many aspects of their movement of renewal. But with regard to their contribution to lyrical theology, the brilliance of Charles's hymns cast a shadow that no one, let alone John, has been able to escape. Of these two brothers, only Charles really merits the status of lyrical theologian. This is not to say that John's contribution to hymnody was insignificant. Once the network of Methodist Societies under his direction began to expand beyond the launch of the movement in 1739, he recognized the important role hymns would play in the unfolding of the revival. He devoted tireless energy to hymn writing, hymnbook editing, and translating.[1] John's influence in each of these areas was important and, therefore, merits attention here; but his primary contribution in this arena was the translation of German lyrical theology into the English language and psyche.

John and Charles Wesley published many of the early Methodist hymn collections jointly. The primary purpose of these volumes was

1 John S. Andrews and J. R. Watson, "John Wesley," *Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, Canterbury Press: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/j/john-wesley; accessed October 8, 2018. This article provides an exceptionally thorough examination of John Wesley's contribution to hymnology and has shaped this chapter extensively.

to supplement the regular patterns of Anglican worship and private devotion. They decided together not to identify which of the hymns they authored, so determining which brother composed disputed texts has always been challenging. Regardless, John's contribution was minute in comparison to that of Charles. In the most critical 1780 *Collection* (examined below in greater detail), John himself claims in the preface that only "a small part of these hymns are of my composing."[2] Only eight hymns from John's pen remain undisputed today, and none of these are in contemporary use. The most noteworthy hymn broadly attributed to John is his lyrical paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, first published in the 1742 collection of *Hymns and Sacred Poems* and later appended to his fourth sermon on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.[3] This hymn enunciates a theology of God's creative grace rooted in love.

John shared his brother's appreciation "for the power of poetry to convey convictions, stir the affections, and strengthen moral resolve."[4] In particular, he valued the way in which hymns could enliven faith, shape the Christian life, and form the theology of the singers in community. Acknowledging that his gifts were less in original composition than in editing and translating the work of others, John devoted his energy more fully in these directions. No accomplishment in the arena of collecting and editing hymns rivals his monumental 1780 *Collection.* The structure of this collection lays out a theological vision anchored in the spiritual journey of the individual in community.

The Theological Structure of the 1780 *Collection*

John Wesley was an exceptional editor of individual hymns. At times this led to Charles's consternation when John set his editorial mind

2 John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 7: A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People Called Methodists*, ed. Franz Hildebrandt and Oliver A. Beckerlegge (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 74.

3 John and Charles Wesley, "The Lord's Prayer Paraphras'd," in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (Bristol: Farley, 1742), 275–77 and John Wesley, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, V," in *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 1, Sermons I (1–33)*, ed. Albert C. Outler (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 550–51.

4 Randy Maddox, Introduction to "John Wesley's Poetry, Hymn, and Verse," The Center for Studies in the Wesleyan Tradition, Duke Divinity School: https://divinity.duke.edu/initiatives/cswt/john-wesley.

on "correcting" the work of his brother in ways that Charles strongly disapproved. But John usually exercised his elder status when disagreements arose; and Charles deferred quietly, most of the time, until in later years when he began asserting his own authorial rights. John pioneered in editorial work related to innovative eighteenth-century hymnbooks, and his careful collection of texts from a wide range of authors made these anthologies devotional manuals second to none. More important for our purposes here, these collections reflected and communicated his theology to the larger community. Indeed, as the Methodists began to take their first steps toward independence, the production of hymnbooks became an important element in forging their new identity.[5] The hymnbooks shaped their theology.

Wesley's 1780 *Collection* contained 525 hymns, primarily from the pen of Charles. John arranged this corpus of lyrical theology into five parts, forming what John described as "a little body of experimental and practical divinity."[6] The framework of the volume—John's invention—reflected the autobiographical nature of faith and theology in the Wesleyan perspective. Moreover, the sequencing of hymns also revealed an underlying Puritan emphasis on spiritual pilgrimage as a theological matrix, to the extent that Hildebrandt and Beckerlegge describe the collection as "a poetical *Pilgrim's Progress*."[7] "The hymns are not carelessly jumbled together," claims Wesley in the preface, "but carefully ranged under proper heads, according to the experience of real Christians." The category of "religious experience" and Wesley's emphasis on the "practical" reinforce these dimensions of his theological vision. His primary theological concerns were the Christian life and the movement of the individual and the community in the direction of God's rule. He had a profound appreciation for the role of lyrical theology, claiming that when poetry functions properly as a handmaid to piety its effects are deep and long-lasting.[8]

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5 See J. R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 217–21. It is important to reiterate here that, as important as the hymnbooks were in forging the early theological identity of the Methodists, this is not the focus of this study.

6 Wesley, *Works*, 7:74.

7 Wesley, *Works*, 7:58.

8 See J. R. Watson, "Poetry and Piety: The Hymnody of John Wesley," *The Journal of Religious History* 1 (2015): 42–55.

Part 1 of the *Collection* contained introductory hymns, exhorting the singer's return to God and describing the pleasantness of religion, the goodness of God, death, judgment, heaven, and hell. This section begins with Charles's majestic hymn "O for a thousand tongues to sing."

Part 2, the shortest section of the hymnal, consisting of only eight hymns, contrasts formal and inward religion. It points to the importance of the interior life and the religion of the heart shaped by the work of the Holy Spirit.

In part 3 the singer begins a journey into the way of salvation with hymns that pray for repentance, mourn sin, avert regression in the spiritual life, and celebrate spiritual birth and recovery. In this section Wesley begins to sound the keynote of his theological program, namely, the experience of God's transforming love. No hymn in this section enunciates this theme more powerfully than Charles's incomparable "Come, O thou traveler unknown."

The hymns of part 4 are for the believer who is rejoicing, fighting, praying, watching, working, suffering, groaning for full redemption, brought to the birth, saved, and interceding for the world. The opening hymn of this lengthy section sets the tone by celebrating the spiritual discoveries that accompany the experience of unconditional love. It is actually Wesley's translation of the Moravian hymn of Johann Andreas Rothe (1688–1758). Selected lines from this hymn reveal a theology of mystic love characteristic of its Pietist underpinnings:

> Now I have found the ground, wherein
> Sure my soul's anchor may remain.
>
> Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
> Thy arms of love still open are.
>
> O love, thou bottomless abyss!
> My sins are swallow'd up in thee.
>
> Mercy's full power I then shall prove,
> Lov'd with an everlasting love.[9]

In this part of the volume Wesley sounds the keynote of joy and emphasizes accountable discipleship in the pursuit of perfect love,

9 Wesley, *HSP* (1740), 91–92, (stanzas 1:1-2; 2:3-4; 3:1-2; 6:5-6).

whereas in the concluding part 5 he interfaces this interior emphasis with life in community and the outward journey of the Christian pilgrim.

The way Wesley structured his 1780 *Collection* reveals much about his theology and how this hymnbook functioned much like a Methodist catechism for his followers. It reflects a sung theology, fundamentally practical in orientation and experiential in nature—a journey of both the individual and the community into the depth of God's love for all.

John Wesley's Translation of German Hymns

The most important contribution that John Wesley made to lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition, with regard to his hymns as opposed to his collections, was his translation of German hymns into English. Drinking deeply from the wells of continental Pietism, in particular, he imbibed and then translated the rich lyrical heritage of this German tradition into English hymns. The German Pietists emphasized a theology of the heart. Tracing its roots back to Johann Arndt (1555–1621), whose classic devotional treatise on *True Christianity* emphasizes the interior spiritual life, these ideas grew into a movement under the leadership of Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705) in the middle of the seventeenth century.[10] In 1675 he published *Pia Desideria* (*Heartfelt Desire*), a slim but monumental introduction to Pietist themes. Carter Lindberg asserts that this book "became the programmatic writing of Pietism and largely reflected Arndt's concerns: the interiorizing of faith, individual experience, the directing of justification toward the 'new creature' and the fruits of rebirth."[11] Spener's vision could be described as heart religion with a social conscience. His specific proposals for the renewal of true religion included a rediscovery of the Bible, the initiation of small groups (*collegia pietatis*) as the matrix of spiritual growth, and the practice of genuine piety.

10 On the origins of Continental Pietism, see Peter C. Erb, ed., *Pietists: Selected Writings* (Mahwah, NY: Paulist Press, 1983), 1–26.

11 Carter Lindberg, ed., *The Pietist Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 8.

Pietism morphed into several streams, some of them taking its interior orientation in mystical directions. "Under Francke's direction," observes Peter Erb, "Halle became a center for pietist study."[12] The work of August Hermann Francke (1663–1727) was of particular interest to John Wesley, who often referred to Halle as a model of genuine Christianity. Francke's mystical and ecumenical vision spread rapidly across German-speaking Europe. Some of the mystical elements of this program were further radicalized. Pietist leaders such as Gottfried Arnold (1666–1698) adhered to the Pietist vision of conversion leading to renovation but "turned his attention to the *unio mystica* and renovation."[13] As this movement blossomed, the German hymn emerged as a poignant conveyor of its theology in lyrical form. "Pietist authors," claims Fred Kimball Graham, "countered formality and ecclesiastical control in worship with hymns recounting and cultivating personal religious experience."[14] The Moravian Pietists of Herrnhut, founded and led by Nicolaus Ludwig, Count Zinzendorf (1700–1760), placed hymn singing at the very center of their common life.

John Wesley acknowledged his providential encounter with these Moravians and the profound influence they exerted on his life and theology. In October 1735 John and Charles left England together to serve as missionary priests in the fledgling colony of Georgia. On the long and frightening voyage, a band of twenty-six Moravian emigrants impressed John deeply by their courage and piety. Their singing of hymns in the midst of cataclysmic Atlantic storms caught his attention more than anything else. On board the ship, therefore, he learned German in order to converse with the emigrants more freely and to sing their hymns. As soon as he had facility to do so, John began to translate hymns from the hymnal they were using, the recently published *Das Gesang-Buch der Gemeine in Herrnhut* (1735), promoted by Zinzendorf himself. Wesley translated thirty-three of these hymns.[15]

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12 Erb, *Pietists*, 9.

13 Erb, *Pietists*, 12.

14 Fred Kimball Graham, "'Practical' and 'Experimental': A Survey of English Language Hymnody in the Modern Age," *Touchstone* 33, no. 1 (February 2015): 28.

15 John L. Nuelsen, *John Wesley und das deutsche Kirchenlied* (Bremen, 1938), translated as *John Wesley and the German Hymns,* trans. Theo Parry,

Dick Watson, in his study of John Wesley's "Poetry and Piety," makes the point that, regardless of the importance of Wesley's own account of his introduction to the Moravians and his subsequent translation project, "what is missing from such an account is any suggestion of what effect the great hymns of the Reformation and after had on him. . . . It is hard to find words to describe the magnificence of these hymns."[16] Wesley included five of his translations in his *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*—the first hymnbook published in Colonial America in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1737. The mystic poem of Ernst Lange (1650–1727), "O God, thou bottomless Abyss," leads the list. The original text provided John his first opportunity to use the metaphor of the sea for the depths of God's mercy, power, and love. "Unfathomable depths thou art! / I plunge me in thy mercy's sea."[17] Zinzendorf's "Jesu, to thee my heart I bow" introduces another critical theme—soul or "heart religion" as translated by Wesley. In a hymn of Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen (1670–1739), "O Jesu, source of calm repose," the singer prays, "Renew thy image Lord in me,"[18] signaling the importance of spiritual restoration. God abides in the human heart:

> A heart that no desire can move,
> But still t' adore and praise and love,
> Give me, my Lord, my life, my all.[19]

The final two hymns, both from the pen of the Halle Pietist Christian Friedrich Richter (1676–1711), emphasize interior restoration and mystic union with Christ. "O make in me thy likeness shine,"[20] the singer pleads, "But in thy will may mine be lost!"[21] In all these hymns the authors herald mystic love.

Sydney H. Moore, and Arthur Holbrook (Calverley, Yorkshire: A. S. Holbrook, 1972). Nuelsen's study remains the most thorough and acute examination of these translations, providing the full texts of the hymns in the original German and English translation.

16 Watson, "Poetry and Piety," 51.

17 [John Wesley], *Collection of Psalms and Hymns* (Charlestown, SC: Timothy, 1737), 15 (stanza 1:5-6).

18 Wesley, *CPH*, 39 (stanza 5:1).

19 Wesley, *CPH*, 39 (stanza 6:4-6).

20 Wesley, *CPH*, 51 (stanza 1:4).

21 Wesley, *CPH*, 57 (stanza 3:4).

Mystic Love in Pietism

Two stellar hymns still sung today demonstrate Wesley's incorporation of the preeminent theme of mystic love from the Pietists into his own theology. They come from the pens of Paul Gerhardt and Gerhard Tersteegen.

Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676), many have argued, is the most significant of all the German hymn writers.[22] The complete edition of his poetic works contains 139 German hymns and poems.[23] The most famous, "O sacred head now wounded" (the English translation of James Alexander), calls the singer into a remembrance of Christ's passion. The themes of suffering, grace in the midst of despair, union with Christ, and the love of God pervade his hymns. In a tribute to Gerhardt, Holger Sonntag examines the crucible of suffering that had been a part of Gerhardt's life narrative and had shaped his hymns. As a consequence of his own suffering, he observes that the hymns are "priceless manna for those who, like Gerhardt, travel through the valley of the shadow of death."[24] Gerhardt was not a Pietist in the sense of a Spener or a Francke, but he stands as a bridge "between the early piestistic movement and later mainstream Pietism."[25] He possessed a deep sensitivity to the way in which speech *about* God passes over into speech *to* God in prayer and hymn. Paul Westermeyer argues that "the central theme of Gerhardt's hymns is the love of God, as opposed to Luther's central theme of grace."[26] His poetry combines God's love, the believer's return of love to God, and the love of neighbor—the vision of life in Christ as a joyful song of love. He stands firmly in the tradition of a theology of the heart.

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22 See the classic study of T. B. Hewitt, *Paul Gerhardt as a Hymn Writer and His Influence on English Hymnody* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1918).

23 Paul Gerhardt, *Wach auf, mein Herz, und singe: Vollständige Ausgabe seiner Lieder und Gedichte*, ed. Eberhard von Cranach-Sichart (Wuppertal: R. Broddiaus, 2004).

24 Holger Sonntag, "In Praise of Paul Gerhardt," *Logia* 16, 4 (Reformation 2007): 48.

25 Christian Bunners, "Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676)," in *The Pietist Theologians*, ed. Lindberg, 73.

26 Paul Westermeyer, "Paul Gerhardt: Who He Was and Why We Care," *Word & World* 27, 1 (Winter 2007): 72.

Wesley prepared a translation of Paul Gerhardt's "O Jesu Christ, mein schönstes Licht" while still in Savannah, subsequently published in 1739 in his first volume of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, under the title "Living by Christ." Years later, in 1766 in his magnum opus, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, he quoted the second stanza, describing it as the cry of his heart as he departed Georgia in the throes of rejection and disillusionment. Four out of the original sixteen verses of "Jesu, thy boundless love to me" appear in the contemporary UMH (183; the first three and the concluding stanza of Wesley's original translation). Ralph Waldo Emerson considered this to be the greatest hymn in the English language.[27]

Gerhard Tersteegen (1697–1769), a near contemporary of the Wesleys, holds a place close to Gerhardt as one of the most gifted among the German hymn writers, albeit in the Reformed tradition. He produced 122 hymns in a larger corpus of some 1,200 lyrical works.[28] Peter Erb considers him to be "the most important of all the Quietistic Pietists," having been influenced deeply by the teachings of the contemporary French mystics Pierre Poiret (1646–1719) and Madame Guyon (1648–1717).[29] Tersteegen's hymnody was the product of a double conversion, according to Jay Rochelle—an initial conversion to a general mystical spirituality and a second "which more thoroughly rooted this spirituality in the Christian revelation and particularly in the sufferings and cross of Christ with which he identified."[30] The central tenets of his theology included the stillness of the heart (*die Stille*) as a pattern for all of life; the quest for holiness as happiness; forgiveness through Christ as union with Christ; and the creative, gracious, and indwelling presence of God. A close analysis of his correspondence, conducted by Emily Chisholm, reveals two of Tersteegen's fundamental concerns: 1) that God is present everywhere, particularly in your heart, and 2) that God loves you

27 According to C. W. Towlson, *Moravian and Methodist: Relationships and Influences in the 18th Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1957), 202.

28 Hansgünter Ludewig, "Gerhard Tersteegen (1697–1769)," in Lindberg, ed., *Pietist Theologians*, 190.

29 Erb, *Pietists*, 16.

30 Jay C. Rochelle, "Wherever You Are, Pray and Remain Recollected in the Presence: An Introduction to the Life and Thought of Gerhard Tersteegen," *The Covenant Quarterly* 46, 1 (February 1988): 15.

dearly and would have you entirely.[31] Wesley was a kindred spirit in all these matters, the realization of which led Steven O'Malley to the conclusion that "he found in the Tersteegen hymns a spirituality that . . . was more congruent with his own spiritual aspirations."[32] While Wesley would later abandon some of the more radical, mystical elements embedded in these hymns, he never strayed from the central tenets of this theology of the heart.

He translated Tersteegen's *Verborgne Gottes-liebe du*, condensing the original eight nine-line stanzas to eight six-line verses in the creation of "**Thou Hidden Love of God**"—his signature hymn. Nuelsen argued that this hymn was by far the most popular and most widely circulated of Wesley's German translations.[33] Wesley completed his work on this hymn, most likely, on his voyage back to England from Georgia. Five of the original verses continue to be sung today from the UMH (414; verses 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8 of the original).

Examining the parallelism of these two hymns—"Jesu, thy boundless love to me" and "Thou hidden love of God"—in the form in which they are sung today, reveals the lyrical theology Wesley embraced. Through his translations of these texts he inculcated this theology among the early Methodists. Four themes in these lyrical prayers for a love-filled life emerge from this comparison.

God's Boundless, Unfathomed Love

First and foremost, both hymns celebrate the unbounded, fathomless, all-consuming love of God. While Tersteegen's hymn (presented in the column on the right) tends to be more aspirational and Gerhardt's (left column) more confessional, these lyrical commentaries on life and love blend affirmation and aspiration in a way that reflects the genuine or authentic nature of our spiritual journey. Both hymns open with an overwhelming sense of God's love:

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31 Emily Chisholm, ed., *The Quiet Way: Selections from the Letters of Gerhard Tersteegen* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 54.

32 J. Steven O'Malley, "Pietistic Influence on John Wesley: Wesley and Gerhard Tersteegen," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 31, 2 (Fall 1996): 53.

33 Nuelsen, *John Wesley and the German Hymn*, 78.

1. Jesu, thy boundless love to me
   No thought can reach, no tongue declare:
   O knit my thankful heart to thee,
   And reign without a rival there.
   Thine wholly, thine alone I am:
   Be thou alone my constant flame.

1. Thou hidden love of God; whose height,
   Whose depth unfathom'd no man knows,
   I see from far thy beauteous light,
   Inly I sigh for thy repose.
   My heart is pain'd, nor can it be
   At rest, till it finds rest in thee.

Humanity's Reciprocal, All-Consuming Love

The boundless love of God elicits a reciprocal love in the beloved. Wesley describes the all-consuming nature of this love in both hymns.

2. O grant that nothing in my soul
   May dwell, but thy pure love alone:
   O may thy love possess me whole,
   My joy, my treasure, and my crown.
   Strange fires far from my soul remove,
   My ev'ry act, word, thought, be love.

4. Is there a thing beneath the sun,
   That strives with thee my heart to share?
   Ah tear it thence, that thou alone
   May'st reign unrival'd monarch there.
   From earthly loves I must be free,
   Ere I can find repose in thee.

As in the parable of the prodigal son, life is like a "maze" in which the child yearns to find his or her way home and, falling into the arms of Love, ceaselessly cry "Abba, Father."

The Heart at Peace

Like the Pietists, Wesley seeks to reclaim a religion of the heart. The heart for him is like a citadel in which the deepest aspirations are embraced and the most critical relationships of life nurtured. The

theology he communicates in these hymn translations is a theology of the heart, and that for which the heart yearns more than anything else is peace. He emphasizes the healing character of God's love, using the metaphor of the rays of the sun that chase away pain, care, anguish, and sorrow. While the disquiet of Gerhardt's hymn revolves more around external impediments to peace, Tersteegen's hymn reflects more fully the dis-ease of the interior life. Here, it is the mind that seeks peace; Wesley locates the source of dis-ease in our being prone to wander. Whether an external or an internal issue, however, love makes peace possible:

3. O love, how chearing is thy ray?
   All pain before thy presence flies!
   Care, anguish, sorrow melt away
   Where'er thy healing beams arise:
   O Jesu, nothing may I see,
   Nothing hear, feel or think but thee!

3. 'Tis mercy all, that thou hast brought
   My mind to seek her peace in thee!
   Yet while I seek, but find thee not,
   No peace my wand'ring soul shall see.
   O when shall all my wand'rings end,
   And all my steps to theeward tend?

The Power of Love

Both hymns conclude with an affirmation of the power of God's love to save and to restore:

16. In suff'ring be thy love my peace,
    In weakness be thy love my pow'r;
    And when the storms of life shall cease,
    Jesu, in that important hour,
    In death as life be thou my guide,
    And save me, who for me hast died!

8. Each moment draw my heart away
   From earth, that lowly waits thy call:
   Speak to my inmost soul, and say
   I am thy love, thy God, thy all!
   To feel thy pow'r, to hear thy voice,
   To taste thy love is all my choice!

In those concluding lines of "Thou hidden love of God," we encounter John Wesley the translator at his very best and have the clearest sense of his indebtedness to the Pietists with regard to the core element of his theology. The singers of this hymn pray for God to speak to their "inmost soul." God proclaims: "I am your love. I am your God. I am your all." The beloved singer *feels* the power, *hears* God's voice, and *tastes* God's love. Wesley invites the singer to a feast of love.

The enduring legacy of John Wesley to the people called Methodists, preached in his sermons, but also sung in these hymns, is the insistence that faith must be translated into action. As S T Kimbrough Jr. has written: "The yearning for love, God's love, to become the all of one's existence is indeed the lifelong prayer of John and Charles Wesley and the central theme of their hymns and their theology."[34] The keynote of John's lyrical theology, shaped particularly by sounding the depths of Pietist theology in the German hymns he translated, is the unbounded, unfathomable love of God that will not let us go. This love calls us to discover our true identity in Christ, and sends us into God's world to share the good news of God's love for all.

34 S T Kimbrough Jr., *A Heart to Praise My God: Wesley Hymns for Today* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 178.

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Successors to the Wesleys

The Path to Fanny Crosby, Gospel Theologian

More than a century went by before anyone even close to the stature of Charles Wesley as a lyrical theologian emerged from the ranks of Methodism. The 1780 *Collection* continued to be a formidable influence on Methodist theology well into the next century, the enduring legacy of both brothers. But new hymn writers soon emerged and continued the practice of lyrical theology established by the founders. As Methodism crossed the Atlantic Ocean, the opening decades of the nineteenth century also witnessed the birth of a new body of hymnody in North America. From among those who stepped into the immediate vacuum left by the Wesleys, five men stand out: John Bakewell and Thomas Olivers in England, and John Adam Granade, Caleb Jarvis Taylor, and John H. Stockton in the New Republic. Both of the English authors had known John Wesley personally, and all of them were influenced by the spirit of Charles's theology. Beyond them, one blind woman dominated the landscape of Methodist lyrical theology—the "queen of the gospel hymn," Fanny Crosby.

British Methodist Hymn Writers

Both Wesley brothers attempted to revive what they called primitive or scriptural Christianity. The gracious love of God, a passionate love of Christ, and an indomitable will to live out this love in the world characterized their theology. The successors of the Wesleys sought to be faithful to this witness in the theology communicated through their own hymns.

John Bakewell (1721–1819) was one of the Wesleys' original preachers, having begun his ministry at the first Methodist Conference of 1744.[1] He produced only several hymns, the most famous (but disputed) text of which is "**Hail, Thou Once Despised Jesus**." This hymn was included in many Methodist hymnals, shaping the theology of countless Methodists since its first publication in 1757. It can be found in the UMH (325) today. According to John Julian, "at about the age of eighteen, his mind was turned towards religious truth by reading Boston's Fourfold State."[2] In this classic of Scottish Puritan theology, based primarily on St. Augustine's doctrine of salvation, Boston depicts human beings in their successive states of primitive integrity, entire depravity, begun recovery, and either consummate happiness or misery. Bakewell's hymn "begins with the suffering and humiliation of Jesus," observes Diana Sanchez, "and contrasts those sharply with his glorification."[3] Unlike Boston's conception of limited atonement, however, this hymn celebrates the Wesleyan vision of Jesus as a "universal Savior" (stanza 1) who brings free salvation to all. In this, Bakewell continued the lyrical theology of the Wesleys.

Thomas Olivers (1725–1799), another near contemporary of the Wesleys in Britain, became a Methodist under the preaching of George Whitefield.[4] Given his description of himself as profane and impious, quick-tempered and outspoken, John Wesley's

1 J. R. Watson, "John Bakewell," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/j/john-bakewell; accessed October 8, 2018.

2 John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1985), 108.

3 Diana Sanchez, ed., *The Hymns of The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 119.

4 J. R. Watson, "Thomas Olivers," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/t/thomas-olivers; accessed October 8, 2018.

characterization of him as "a rough stick of wood," should come as no surprise.[5] But Wesley perceived a potential preacher of great energy and influence in this shoemaker of Bradford-on-Avon. In 1773, in fact, he invited Olivers to be his traveling companion and mentored him accordingly. Like Bakewell, Olivers only wrote several hymns, and the one that has had lasting influence is "**The God of Abraham Praise**," also included in the UMH (116). This majestic act of praise acclaims Jehovah the "great I AM" in three of the four stanzas, echoing the acclamation of the Jewish Yidgal (doxology) upon which it is based. The singer praises "the God of love" (stanza 1) and the "wonders of God's grace" (stanza 2), themes pervasive in the lyrical theology of the Wesley brothers.

Camp Meeting Hymns of the American Frontier

Tom Langford opens his chapter "The Americanization of Wesleyan Theology" with a self-evident but incisive statement: "North American Methodism, separated from England by geographic distance, existed in a different cultural setting."[6] One of the most interesting developments in hymnody in this new frontier context was the creation and evolution of an American folk hymnody.[7] The camp meeting hymn or song (both terms were used from the beginning) emerged as one of the most potent conveyers of theology among the Methodists. "This sub-genre," as Richard Hulan has described it, consists of "wandering rhyme pairs or the dissected remains of some familiar evangelical hymn, interspersed with variations on the 'hallelujah' theme and performed in a call-and-response pattern."[8] The composers of these songs not only simplified the poetic form,

5 John Wesley, *The Works of John Wesley, Volume 27, Letters III (1756–1765)*, ed. Ted A. Campbell (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2015), 283.

6 Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 78.

7 See Richard H. Hulan, "Camp Meeting Hymns and Songs, USA," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/c/camp-meeting-hymns-and-songs,-usa; accessed October 16, 2018. The following discussion of the camp meeting hymns is based in large measure upon David Warren Steel and Richard H. Hulan, *The Makers of The Sacred Harp* (Urbana, Chicago, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press, 2010).

8 Hulan, "Camp Meeting Hymns."

minimalizing textual complexities and maximizing audience participation, but simplified and more sharply focused the theological content as well. The songs drawn from an increasing number of "songsters" on the frontier unified large and disorderly assemblies around a common purpose and vision.

Richard Hulan, a leading historian of the camp meeting revivals that began in the border territories of Kentucky and Tennessee in 1800, has documented the way in which "this movement began to produce a new body of hymns suitable for the new context of worship."[9] These events influenced Methodist lyrical theology on multiple levels. First, the camp meeting hymns reinforced heart religion, emphasizing the monumental spiritual changes wrought by the Spirit in the lives of individuals. Second, given the social and communal nature of these events, the hymns also fostered a sense of unity and camaraderie as families normally separated by miles on the frontier gathered for this unique form of Christian fellowship. Third, while many of the Methodists sought to be faithful to the theological legacy they had inherited, the ecumenical nature of the camp meeting led to a more broadly defined evangelicalism. Under the influence of Second Great Awakening revivalists such as Charles Grandison Finney (1792–1875), conversion, as opposed to holiness, became an increasingly central theme.

John Adam Granade (1763–1807) emerged as the first and perhaps greatest Methodist camp meeting hymnist.[10] He began producing his popular songs in 1800 following a dramatic conversion at one of the first camp meetings in Sumner County, Kentucky. Welcomed into the ranks of Methodist itinerant preachers that year, he published thirty-one of his hymns in *The Pilgrim's Songster: A New Composition* in 1804. The famous evangelist Lorenzo Dow acquired a copy of this hymn collection and popularized Granade's hymns in both the United States and Great Britain, particularly among the revivalistic Primitive Methodists in England. The primary theological themes in his hymns include pilgrimage, the burdens of life and sin, and God's love in Jesus. One stanza of a popular hymn begins "Come, all ye pilgrims of the Lord, / Where hearts are joined in

9 Steele and Hulan, *Makers of The Sacred Harp*, 62–63.

10 See Richard Hulan, "John Adam Granade: The 'Wild Man' of Goose Creek,'" *Western Folklore* 33 (1974): 77–87. Hymn references come from this article.

one." "Ye weary heavy laden souls" and "O do not be discouraged / For Jesus is your friend" reflect the hardships of frontier life and the burden of sin removed by Christ's atoning work. Perhaps no hymn of this "wild man of Goose Creek," as he was called—this master of shape-note singing—better typifies the perennial undercurrent of his lyrical theology than this signature text:

> **I Love Thee, I Love Thee, I Love Thee, My Lord**;
> I love Thee, my Savior, I love Thee, my God:
> I love Thee, I love Thee, and that Thou dost know;
> But how much I love Thee my actions will show (Baptist Hymnal [1991], 211:1).

He set the tone for all that followed in this genre.

Caleb Jarvis Taylor (1763–1817) published twenty original hymns in his own songbook in 1804. As a Methodist circuit rider, and former Roman Catholic, he established congregations in northeastern Kentucky and participated in the so-called Great Revival that broke out in the early years of the nineteenth century. Thomas Hinde, a younger Methodist itinerant preacher, believed Taylor's spiritual songs fanned the sacred flame of revival on the frontier. While Hinde acknowledged that Taylor's compositions would never be prized for their sophistication, he argued that "no other composition of poetry suited the taste of frontier people so well."[11] Taylor articulated the typical camp meeting themes: "Come and taste along with me; / The weary pilgrim's consolation."[12] Something of a mystical spirit informs his "Almighty love inspire my heart with sacred flame." But the opening stanza and refrain of "**O Jesus, My Savior, I Know Thou Art Mine**," his signature text, captures the central theme of his lyrical theology:

> O Jesus, my Savior, I know Thou art mine;
> For Thee all the pleasures of earth I resign;
> Of objects most pleasing, I love Thee the best;
> Without Thee I'm wretched, but with Thee I'm blest.

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11 Thomas S. Hinde, "An Appendix to Short Sketches of Revivals of Religion Among the Methodists in the Western Country," *The Methodist Magazine* 11, 5 (May 1828): 190.

12 All hymn titles and texts pertaining to Taylor are from Chris Hoh, "Caleb Jarvis Taylor": https://hymnary.org/person/Taylor_Caleb; accessed March 6, 2019.

Refrain:
O praise the Lord, I'm saved,
I'm saved by the blood of the Lamb;
I'm saved, I'm saved,
O praise the Lord, I'm saved.

John H. Stockton (1813–1877) was converted at a Methodist camp meeting in his late teens and thereafter served most of his life as an itinerant preacher in New Jersey.[13] A generation removed from the Methodist founders of the camp meeting hymns, he engaged in the evangelistic campaigns of Dwight L. Moody (1837–1899) and Ira D. Sankey (1840–1908). He published a number of his hymns in the famous *Salvation Melodies No. 1*, one of the most significant evangelistic hymn collections of the late nineteenth century, including his most well-known, "**Come, Every Soul by Sin Oppressed**." Sometimes known by the title "Only Trust Him," this hymn serves as Stockton's signature text and is the only of these early camp meeting songs in the UMH (337). The refrain of the hymn enunciates his central theme: the urgency of salvation through faith in Jesus.

Only trust him, only trust him, only trust him now.
He will save you, he will save you, he will save you now.

Most of the songbooks of this era claimed Methodist origins, and they all brimmed with the folk hymnody of camp meeting revivalism, influenced by the compositions of Granade, Taylor, and Stockton. They also paved the way for the "gospel hymn."

Fanny Crosby: Lyrical Theologian of the Gospel Song

Not until the final quarter of the nineteenth century and the birth of the gospel song did a new and equally prolific voice alongside that of Charles Wesley emerge in the Methodist tradition. *Frances Jane "Fanny" Crosby* (1820–1915) is the only other hymn writer in the history of the church to challenge Wesley's nine thousand hymns. She probably wrote just as many; and given her level of productivity, the range of her hymns, and their pervasive influence throughout the church, she merits the status of a lyrical theologian.

13 Bert Polman, "John H. Stockton," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/j/john-h-stockton; accessed October 8, 2018.

According to Harry Eskew, the primary antecedents of the gospel song "were camp meeting songs which joined personal witness and freedom of expression."[14] Their composers took the name from the widely popular revival song collections of Philip P. Bliss, *Gospel Songs* (1874) and Bliss and Ira D. Sankey, *Gospel Hymns and Sacred Songs* (1875). Gospel songs featured simple lyrics and popular folk tunes, often constructed in a stanza-refrain format. Collections like those of Bliss and Sankey became runaway best-sellers.[15] As one might well expect, the judgment with regard to this new genre of hymnody was mixed at best. The great hymnologist John Julian considered Crosby's hymns to be "very weak and poor, their simplicity and earnestness being their redeeming features."[16] Most of Crosby's detractors, then and now, criticize her sentimentality and the cliché nature of her texts, characteristics particularly abhorrent to John Wesley. On the other hand, a contemporary social worker, Ann Cobham, observed that Crosby's hymns "brought solace and enheartenment to millions. They are songs that will never die."[17] Regardless, the gospel songs inculcated a particular theological vision among the singers of the nineteenth-century revivals and beyond.

In his monumental examination of *The Faith We Sing*, Paul Schilling identifies seven main themes in the gospel songs: the reality of personal salvation through Jesus Christ; the intimate relationship between the redeemed sinner and the Savior; the helplessness and complete dependence of the recipient of salvation; the experience of rest and security available to those who trust in Jesus; the summons to strive for Christlikeness of character; a highly individualized view of salvation; and an emphasis on heaven.[18] Given this list, it is easy to see how Tamara Van Dyken might argue that "gospel hymnody

14 Harry Eskew, "Gospel Songs and Hymns, USA," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/g/gospel-songs-and-hymns,-usa; accessed October 16, 2018.

15 Sandra S. Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century Revivalism* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 20–49.

16 Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology*, 1204.

17 Quoted in Bernard Ruffin, *Fanny Crosby: The Hymn Writer* (Uhrichsville, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1976), 14.

18 S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 178–82.

was integral to the construction of modern evangelicalism."[19] The sentimental conception of relation to God and a cross-focused view of redemption appealed to the cultivators of popular nineteenth-century American culture. Having discerned all these same biblical themes in the early gospel hymns, Darrell Larson concludes quite simply that "the intent of these songwriters is to share the simple gospel of salvation in a way every Christian can understand. . . . Gospel songs are written to stir the masses to evangelical fervor."[20] Fanny Crosby emerged as the champion of this new form of lyrical theology.

The basic parameters of Fanny Crosby's life are well-known.[21] Born into a distinguished Puritan family, she was blinded through the mistreatment of an eye infection when she was six weeks old. She attended the New York City School for the Blind where the teachers immediately recognized her musical gifts as a singer and instrumentalist and her remarkable intellectual and poetic capacities. Crosby experienced a radical conversion in 1850 in New York City under Methodist influences and embarked on a path of discipleship that entailed both evangelical revival and social action. Although a published poet at a young age, she only began writing hymns in the mid-1860s, having been encouraged to do so by the publisher William Bradbury, composer of the tune for "Jesus Loves Me." Crosby's form of white northern evangelicalism, according to her biographer Edith Blumhofer, came alive in Methodism.[22] The sentiments expressed in her hymns, set to the tunes of William Howard Doane (1832–1915) and Phoebe Palmer Knapp (1839–1908), echoed in the hearts and minds of her fellow Methodists.

Fanny Crosby composed more than eight thousand songs but also wrote under many pseudonyms, making it difficult to fully assess her hymn corpus. More than fifty of her songs remain in common use

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19 Tamara J. Van Dyken, "Worship Wars, Gospel Hymns, and Cultural Engagement in American Evangelicalism, 1890–1940," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 27, 2 (Summer 2017): 192.

20 Darrell Larson, "'When We All Get to Heaven': The Ecumenical Influence of the American Gospel Song," *Restoration Quarterly*, 36, 3 (1994): 169, 172.

21 This discussion of her life depends heavily on Edith L. Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See: The Life and Hymns of Fanny J. Crosby* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2005).

22 Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See*, 345.

today. The American Protestant Hymns Project identifies six of her hymns among the most frequently printed between 1737 and 1960.[23] The editors of the UMH included the following seven:

"To God Be the Glory" (98)
"Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" (301)
"Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" (351)
"Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is Mine" (369)
"Close to Thee" (407)
"I Am Thine, O Lord" (419)
"Rescue the Perishing" (591)

This selection of hymns typifies the gospel song in terms of both style and content. The enduring legacy of this influential lyrical theologian is encapsulated in these texts that reflect Tom Langford's depiction of early American Methodist theology: "John Wesley constituted the background; the sovereignty of God and human sinfulness, the content; and personal salvation finally realized in sanctification, the goal."[24]

According to Larson, "Fanny fixed her attention on a variety of spiritual subjects, including the church, the Holy Spirit, the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christ's atoning death, his second coming, redemption by faith in Jesus, and life everlasting. Her primary mission was to spread the gospel of Jesus to all men and give them a hope for eternal life."[25] Blumhofer, in her definitive biography of Crosby, included a chapter entitled "Gospel Hymns: Crosby's 'Creed in Metre.'" She observes that, if Crosby's hymns were "weak on carefully nuanced theology, her simple words had the virtue of indisputable clarity about religious experience and its practical outflow."[26] According to her, the primary theological tenets embedded in Crosby's hymns echoed the sentiments of the rank-and-file Methodists of her day: salvation, consecration, service, and heaven. Fanny's simple vocabulary of "cleansing, rest, safety, intimacy with Christ,

23 Richard J. Mouw and Mark A. Noll, *Wonderful Words of Life: Hymns in American Protestant History & Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), 251–64.

24 Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 80–81.

25 Larson, "American Gospel Song," 156–57.

26 Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See*, 251–52.

duty, readiness for Christ's return, and seeing Christ" both shaped and mirrored these concerns.[27] Crosby's gospel songs emphasize "the centrality of Christ, forgiveness of sin, salvation, consecration, Christian service, and life after death (heaven)," writes S T Kimbrough Jr.[28] Darrell Larson concludes that the primary purpose of these hymns was "to inspire individual conversion and a 'shared devotional piety' that would result in moral and social reform."[29] All these concerns, I believe, can be reduced to three broad theological categories: intimacy with God, personal redemption through the cross, and engagement in God's mission in the world. I will illustrate each of these with a single song.

Intimacy with God

Fanny Crosby's hymns express the human desire for intimacy with God. She does not portray Jesus as a distant deity; rather, he shares intimate friendship with us in this life. Christ does not offer salvation from afar but reaches inward to save us. Sandra Sizer notes that this element of relationality for Crosby is not a "sphere of passivity but of passion."[30] Michael Hawn and June Hobbs have demonstrated how the rhetoric of intimacy in these hymns functions to break down the barriers that separate us from God and one another.[31] None of Crosby's songs express this intimacy more poignantly than "I Am Thine, O Lord." The words of this hymn emerged from "a deep intangible feeling," she said, "whose expression demanded the language of poetry."[32]

> I am Thine, O Lord; I have heard Thy voice,
> And it told Thy love to me,

27 Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See*, 253.

28 S T Kimbrough Jr., "Interpreting a Different Fanny Jane Crosby," *The Hymn* 69, 1 (Winter 2018): 29.

29 Larson, "American Gospel Song," 194.

30 Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion*, 33.

31 C. Michael Hawn and June Hadden Hobbs, "'Thy Love . . . Hath Broken Every Barrier Down': The Rhetoric of Intimacy in Nineteenth-Century British and American Women's Hymns," in *Music and Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Martin V. Clarke (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012), 61–77.

32 Quoted in Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See*, 221.

But I long to rise in the arms of faith
And be closer drawn to Thee (UMH 419:1).

The chorus, with its repeated "Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord," amplifies this longing of the heart. "If urban life magnified a sense of human isolation," observes Blumhofer, "Crosby countered with a promise of enduring, ever-deepening intimacy."[33]

Personal Redemption through the Cross

Hymns such as "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" and "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross" reflect Fanny's emphasis on the centrality of the cross in her understanding of salvation. But the crucifixion not only revealed God's great love and mercy for all; it represented a place of healing, security, nurture, and, ultimately, hope and trust. Fanny's use of the first person, one of her most typical conventions, reflects her deep sense of the autobiographical nature of faith—what Robert Cushman described as the enpersonalization of faith. While hymns like these expressed a deep sense of personal salvation through faith in the Christ of the cross, the corporate singing of these texts created what Sizer has described as a "community of intense feeling."[34] Saved "by the blood of the Lamb," the community joins in the chorus of "Jesus, keep me near the cross": "In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever."

"To God Be the Glory" affords Crosby's most well-developed portrait of the redemptive work of Christ: the incarnation, the blood of Christ shed to atone for the sin of humanity, the vile offender receiving pardon:

1. To God be the glory, great things he hath done!
   So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
   who yielded his life an atonement for sin,
   and opened the lifegate that all may go in.

2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
   to every believer the promise of God;
   the vilest offender who truly believes,
   that moment from Jesus a pardon receives.

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33 Blumhofer, *Her Heart Can See*, 266.

34 Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion*, 52, 114–16, 134–38.

3. Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son;
but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see.

Crosby espouses here a Wesleyan conception of universal redemption in which God offers grace to all. A master of alliteration, she bears witness to a vision of redemption that is promised and perfect; she celebrates the sinner who is both purchased and pardoned. Thanksgiving for salvation erupts in a refrain of doxological praise:

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the earth hear his voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory, great things he hath done!

Engagement in God's Mission in the World

In her study of the gospel hymn Sandra Sizer makes an important point about the purpose of these texts. While story-telling and supplication frequently characterize these songs, exhorting the singer to engage in witness, service, and mission dominates Crosby's hymns.[35] Her work in Manhattan's Bowery provided the impetus for "Rescue the Perishing." In this hymn she paints a picture of a lost and dying world desperately needing the saving power of Jesus, which elicits empathy and compassion in the singer:

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
weep o'er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
tell them of Jesus, the mighty to save (1).

While you will not find a sophisticated differentiation between mission and evangelism in her hymns, Crosby simply challenges the church to a more active role in sharing the gospel. In a brief discussion of "a different Fanny Jane Crosby," Kimbrough uncovers this lesser-known side of her theology. Reflecting on a hymn entitled "To the Rescue," he maintains that Fanny's question, "Have we fed the

35 Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion*, 169.

poor and clothed them, / as the Saviour gave command?" resonates deeply with the spirit of Charles Wesley.[36]

All these themes coalesce in what can be described easily as Fanny Crosby's most popular hymn—her signature text—a gospel song that may be found in nearly nine hundred hymnals, "**Blessed Assurance**."

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
   O what a foretaste of glory divine!
   Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
   born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

   Refrain:
   This is my story, this is my song,
   praising my Savior all the day long;
   this is my story, this is my song,
   praising my Savior all the day long.

Having been filled with the goodness of Jesus, the singers find themselves lost in his love.

Fanny Crosby's gospel song tradition proved to be something of a watershed for lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition. In particular, three divergent streams emerged from this wellspring, all of which drew their energy from this gospel heritage: one whose authors continued Fanny's theological legacy; another whose proponents rediscovered the centrality of holiness in the tradition; and a third that echoed the soul of black Methodism.

36 Kimbrough, "Interpreting a Different Fanny Crosby," 29.

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Successors to Crosby

gospel and holiness songs

In the development of lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition, one particular thread runs throughout its entire course: the centrality of scripture. Before moving into an examination of the continuing legacy of the gospel song, a classical hymnist merits attention because of the way in which she has helped the community maintain such a clear focus on the Bible.

Mary Artemisia Lathbury (1841–1913), a multitalented educator, artist, editor, and poet, gained fame in her own day for her promotion of the Sunday School, Temperance, and Chautauqua movements.[1] She composed most of her hymns as "the laureate of Chautauqua" for this institution founded to resource religious educators in upstate New York. One of her two best-known hymns, "Day Is Dying in the West," is still sung in the Sunday Vespers service at Lake Chautauqua today. But her most famous signature hymn prays for God to open the Word to the community of faith. The hymn, included in the UMH (599), invites the singer into a relationship with the scriptures, revealing truth, breaking bondage, and celebrating peace.

1. **Break thou the bread of life**, dear Lord, to me,
   as thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;
   beyond the sacred page I seek thee, Lord;
   my spirit pants for thee, O Living Word!

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1 See Gladys E. Grey, "Mary Artemisia Lathbury: A 50th Anniversary Tribute," *The Hymn* 14, 2 (April 1963): 37–46.

2. Bless thou the truth, dear Lord, to me, to me,
as thou didst bless the bread by Galilee;
then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
and I shall find my peace, my all in all.

The Continuing Legacy of Gospel Songs

The composers of the popular gospel songs under the template of Crosby retained this love of scripture and the keen sense of its authority in life and faith. Certainly, their concern for a rediscovery of the Bible characterized the revival under evangelists such as Moody and Sankey and fueled Fanny's poetic muse. As Stan Gundry has argued, three central biblical truths dominated both the revival and the gospel songs so closely associated with it. As the movement evolved into the twentieth century, these "three Rs," as he calls them, became more firmly entrenched in the theological psyche of many Methodists caught up in these developments: ruined by the Fall, redeemed by the blood, and regenerated by the Spirit.[2] In the ever-expanding collections of gospel hymns and songs to which Methodists contributed, the theological concepts of sin redeemed by the cross and the quest for holiness abound, almost excluding any other concerns. One of the foremost students of modern American revivalism, William McLoughlin, long ago claimed that "the congregational hymns were doctrinal in character, telling of God's merciful salvation, free for all" and reiterated the "sermon messages with even greater simplicity."[3] As distinguished from the earlier and more classical hymnody of the Wesleys, often characterized by a deep sense of mystery and wonder, these simple, catchy tunes sounded a note of triumph and fruition. To say the very least, they celebrated Jesus.

Louisa M. R. Stead (c. 1850–1917), born in Dover, England, had always felt a call to mission. As a young adult she moved to Cincinnati and dedicated her life to this vision at a camp meeting in Urbana, Ohio. She was married in 1875 and had a daughter but lost her husband in his efforts to save a drowning child in Long Island

2 Stanley N. Gundry, "The Three Rs of Moody's Theology," *Christian History* 8, 1 (1990): 16–19.

3 William G. McLoughlin Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1959), 236.

Sound on a holiday. This tragic event inspired her to write her most enduring hymn, "'**Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus**" (UMH 462). In the first stanza of this signature text, the singer rests in Jesus' promises. The next two stanzas celebrate how trust in Jesus releases the believer from the power of sin, healing, cleansing, and restoring "life and rest, and joy and peace." The refrain expresses gratitude to God for the lesson of trust in Jesus she has learned in life, concluding, as does every verse:

> Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!
> How I've proved him o'er and o'er!
> Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
> O for grace to trust him more!

Louisa and her daughter, Lily, left soon thereafter to serve for many years as missionaries in South Africa. Upon Louisa's death, missionary friends wrote this tribute: "We miss her very much, but her influence goes on as our five thousand native Christians continually sing this hymn in their native language."[4] If sung in its entirety, this hymn names Jesus no less than twenty-five times.

Charles H. Gabriel (1856–1932) continued this gospel hymn legacy as well.[5] The themes of devotion to Jesus and personal relationship to Christ, in addition to the sheer wonder to be found in Jesus' self-sacrificial love, all combine in Gabriel's most famous gospel hymn, "**I Stand Amazed in the Presence**" (UMH 371). Born in Hollywood, California, and following in his father's footsteps, Gabriel embraced a career in music and ultimately secured the prestigious appointment as director of music at Grace Methodist Church in San Francisco. His compositions include more than seven thousand Sunday School songs, gospel hymns, anthems, and cantatas, in almost a hundred collections. While most gospel songs were composed for mass urban revivals, Gabriel "was among the first if not the first," according to Terry York, "to compose gospel hymns specifically for the local

4 Kenneth W. Osbeck, *Amazing Grace* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1990), 220.

5 See the account of Bert Polman, "Charles Hutchinson Gabriel," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/c/charles-hutchinson-gabriel; accessed October 8, 2018.

church."[6] Had more of his many hymns endured, he may have qualified as a lyrical theologian alongside Crosby. But the most that can be said is that, for a moment in time, Gabriel emerged as the most popular gospel song writer associated with the evangelistic crusades of Billy Sunday and Homer Rodeheaver during the First World War.

This hymn, properly entitled "I Stand Amazed," and set to a tune that Gabriel himself composed, first appeared in the widely popular gospel song collection of E. O. Excell, *Praises*, in 1905. Gabriel based this poignant reflection on the Gethsemane experience of Jesus recorded in Luke 22:41-44 in which Jesus struggles with God's will related to the cross. Verse 44 reveals the depth of his travail in prayer: "In his anguish he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground." Gabriel recreates the scene in his second stanza of the hymn:

> For me it was in the garden
> he prayed: "Not my will, but thine."
> He had no tears for his own griefs,
> but sweat-drops of blood for mine.

The singer stands awestruck by a Savior who is able to love condemned and unclean sinners, who bore our sorrows and made them his own, and who carried it all to the cross to bleed and die there alone. Overwhelmed by such love, the singer exclaims:

> How marvelous! How wonderful!
> And my song shall ever be:
> How marvelous! How wonderful
> is my Savior's love for me!

Lelia Morris (1862–1929) exemplifies this same focus on sin, Jesus, and redemption but also serves as a bridge into the world of the holiness hymn. An Ohio native, after her marriage she became an avid member of the Methodist Episcopal Church in McConnelsville. She records this simple but momentous event in her life. "I was stitching at my sewing machine and singing at my work," she recalled. "Suddenly I realized that I was singing a message from my heart.

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6 Terry W. York, "Charles Hutchinson Gabriel: (1856–1932): Composer, author, and editor in the gospel tradition" (DMA dissertation, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 1985), 156.

I walked over to the piano and played it. From that time on I have written little hymns. New songs crowd into my mind, four or five in a day! You just would not believe how fast they came."[7] Apprehensive about what people would think of her compositions, she kept her songs hidden for some time. But once she relinquished her inhibitions and made them public, they gained immediate popularity. Having undertaken hymn composition in her thirties, and although totally blind at fifty-two, it is estimated that Morris composed well over one thousand gospel songs, most of them for the camp meetings she loved to attend in Mount Vernon and Sebring, Ohio. Continuing to compose hymns until her death, "she would simply remember the songs until her daughter, Fanny, came for an annual visit," avers holiness hymnologist Keith Schwanz. "Lelia would dictate dozens of songs as her daughter wrote them down, both words and music."[8]

Three titles of Lelia Morris's most popular hymns aptly characterize the primary contours of her lyrical theology: "Nearer, Still Nearer, Close to Thy Heart," "Of Jesus' Love That Sought Me," and "If You Are Tired of the Load of Your Sin." The first hymn celebrates the sheltering heart of Jesus from which the cleansing blood flows. The singer pleads, "Give me but Jesus, my Lord crucified," as the soul yearns for still greater intimacy with the Savior. The proper title of the second hymn is "Sweeter as the Years Go By" (*Hymns of Faith* [1980], 280). The first verse and refrain suffice to demonstrate Morris's celebration of the dimensions of Jesus' mercy and love:

> Of Jesus' love that sought me,
> When I was lost in sin—
> Of wondrous grace that brought me
> Back to His fold again—
> Of heights and depths of mercy
> Far deeper than the sea,
> And higher than the heavens,
> My theme shall ever be.

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7 Mary Ethel Wiess, *Singing at Her Work: A Biography of Mrs. C. H. Morris* (Kansas City: Nazarene Publishing House, 1953), 32.

8 Keith Schwanz, "Quiet Woman, Exuberant Song, Lelia Morris (1862–1929)," in *Satisfied: Women Hymn Writers of the 19th-Century Wesleyan Holiness Movement* (Grantham, PA: Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy, Inc., 1998), 48.

Refrain:
Sweeter as the years go by,
Sweeter as the years go by;
Richer, fuller, deeper,
Jesus' love is sweeter,
Sweeter as the years go by.

The third hymn, "**If You Are Tired of the Load of Your Sin**" (*Baptist Hymnal* (2008), 416), has appeared in more hymnals than any other of her gospel songs and functions appropriately as her signature hymn. The chorus stresses the urgency of faith in Jesus with its repeated "Just now . . . just now . . . just now," encouraging the singer to "reject him no more," "throw open the door," and, ultimately, "let Jesus come into your heart." Morris exemplifies the simplest and most direct form of "heart religion." The stanzas amplify the sense of weariness caused by sin, the doubt that clouds life, the tempests of this world, and the purity for which all people long. Jesus, Morris enjoins, offers new life, cleanses from sin, fills the void, provides a glad song to sing and, ultimately, a mansion in which to rest. This hymn diagnoses the disease, offers the remedy, and illuminates the goal. Given the size of Morris's hymn corpus, she might have qualified as a lyrical theologian in the Methodist tradition, had Methodists not abandoned her hymns as they were picked up by other evangelical and holiness traditions.

Many of her hymns were adopted, in fact, particularly by those within the holiness movement because of their emphasis on sanctification. Those within the Wesleyan holiness tradition warmed to the themes of transforming power, total consecration, and full salvation and appropriated her songs, publishing them in their own hymnbooks. One, in particular, usually known by the opening words of the refrain, "Holiness unto the Lord" (*Christ in Song* [1900], 241), has become the unofficial theme song of the Church of the Nazarene. The opening stanza and chorus apply the well-established gospel themes to the community of faith:

"Called unto holiness," Church of our God,
Purchase of Jesus, redeemed by His blood;
Called from the world and its idols to flee,
Called from the bondage of sin to be free.

Refrain:
"Holiness unto the Lord" is our watchword and song,
"Holiness unto the Lord" as we're marching along;
Sing it, shout it, loud and long,
"Holiness unto the Lord," now and forever.

Phoebe Palmer and the American Holiness Movement

Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874) can be described properly as the mother of the holiness movement in the United States and the higher life movement in Britain.[9] The gospel hymn tradition attended more fully to a theology of conversion than to that of sanctification or holiness.[10] Developments revolving around Palmer and her circle of friends brought renewed attention to holiness in the Methodist theology of redemption as restoration. In New York City in the 1830s she and her sister facilitated what came to be known as the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness. Priscilla Pope-Levison observes that, on what Palmer called her "day of days"—July 26, 1837—"she experienced sanctification, 'the full assurance of faith,' for which she had been searching."[11] This experience catapulted her into a range of ministries that came to define her life as a holiness theologian, author, missioner, evangelist, and preacher. Palmer's practical approach to a lived theology centered in experience, rooted the doctrine of holiness in scripture, and emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit. Her endorsement of spontaneity and her insistence on the possibility of instantaneous transformation in the religious life fit easily into the revivalist temperament of the period.[12]

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9 With regard to Palmer's contribution to Methodist theology, two works are of particular significance: Charles Edward White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian, Revivalist, Feminist and Humanitarian* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2008) and Elaine Heath, *Naked Faith: The Mystical Theology of Phoebe Palmer* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2009).

10 For the shift to "conversion as the revivalist's goal," see Michael J. McClymond, "Revivals and Revivalism," in *Encyclopedia of Religious Revivals in America*, 2 vols. (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007): 1:368.

11 Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Turn the Pulpit Loose: Two Centuries of American Women Evangelists* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 63.

12 See the trenchant study of Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957).

"Phoebe Palmer was determined to make the reality of holiness available to Christian believers," maintains Tom Langford, "and she insistently raised the question, 'Is there not a shorter way' to the holy life? Her answer was Yes."[13] For more than three decades she promoted her so-called parlor holiness, developing an "altar theology" that was spread far and wide through her participation in revivals and through a growing body of holiness songs. Candy Brown succinctly describes her program of spiritual advance:

> According to Palmer's altar theology, the Christian must first decide to consecrate oneself entirely to Christ, by figuratively laying one's "all upon the altar." One knows that the blessing of sanctification has been received by "naked faith" in a "naked promise" of the Bible; one need not wait for the Holy Spirit to give "witness" to sanctification through an emotional experience.[14]

This "second definite work of grace," as it was often called—entire sanctification—enabled the faithful believer to live a holy life, cleansed from sin and filled with power for ministry. In 1843 Palmer published her vision of this "shorter way" in a widely circulated book, *The Way of Holiness*.

The Theology of Holiness Hymns

The foremost student of American holiness hymnology, Mel Wilhoit, makes this extraordinary claim: "Much, if not most, of the impact on the altered nineteenth-century view towards sanctification and holiness," he maintains, "can be laid squarely at the feet of Phoebe Palmer, whose hymn, '**The Cleansing Wave**,' exemplifies her 'shorter way' of accomplishing Wesley's longed-for second blessing."[15]

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13 Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 92.

14 Candy Gunther Brown, "Healing," in *The Cambridge Companion to American Methodism*, ed. Jason E. Vickers (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 232.

15 Mel R. Wilhoit, "American Holiness Hymnody: Some Questions: A Methodology," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 25, 2 (Fall 1990): 44.

O, now I see the crimson wave,
The fountain deep and wide,
Jesus, my Lord, mighty to save,
Points to His wounded side.

Refrain:
The cleansing stream, I see, I see!
I plunge, and Oh, it cleanseth me!
Oh, praise the Lord, it cleanseth me!
It cleanseth me, yes cleanseth me!

In this signature text (*SDA Hymnal* [2019], 332), stanza three articulates the change wrought by the work of the Holy Spirit:

I rise to walk in heaven's own light,
Above the world and sin,
With heart made pure, and garments white,
And Christ enthroned within.

The popular gospel song—through both the power of its words and its musical style—became a natural vehicle for this new holiness theology. The holiness hymn became an immediate sensation.

Mary D. James (1810–1883), a fellow Methodist, emerged as a prominent figure in the Wesleyan holiness movement, assisting Palmer and leading meetings at the Ocean Grove conference grounds in New Jersey.[16] "**All for Jesus**" (*Trinity Psalter Hymnal* [2018], 502), her signature text, remains one of the most popular from among her some fifty hymns. Its singular characteristic is the total consecration it demands. The singers put all their powers; all their thoughts, words, and deeds; all their days; and all their hours into the hands of Jesus. A half century later, *Judson W. Van Deventer* (1855–1939) would popularize this sentiment in the much-beloved song "**I Surrender All**" (UMH 354). According to hymnologist Kenneth Osbeck, Van Deventer composed this hymn in response to a particular experience he had in the home of George Sebring:

> For some time, I had struggled between developing my talents in the field of art and going into full-time evangelistic work. At last the pivotal hour of my life came, and I surrendered

16 See Joseph H. James, *The Life of Mrs. Mary D. James* (New York: Palmer & Hughes, 1886); available online at http://babel.hathitrust.org.

> all. A new day was ushered into my life. I became an evangelist and discovered down deep in my soul a talent hitherto unknown to me. God had hidden a song in my heart, and touching a tender chord, he caused me to sing.[17]
>
> All to Jesus I surrender;
> all to him I freely give;
> I will ever love and trust him,
> in his presence daily live.
>
> Refrain:
> I surrender all, I surrender all,
> all to thee, my blessed Savior,
> I surrender all.

The repetition in this signature hymn relentlessly imprints the central theological theme in the hearts and minds of the singers. If sung in its entirety, the word "surrender" occurs thirty times; the word "all" repeats no less than forty-three times. Nineteenth-century holiness entailed total surrender.

William Hartsough (1828–1919) produced one of the most classic holiness hymns, a composition that has appeared in more than 550 hymnals: "**I Hear Thy Welcome Voice**."[18] In his analysis of holiness hymns, Wilhoit has defined this genre, in part, on the basis of how the composers use language.

> Within Holiness teachings, certain words became charged with heightened meaning, accessible to those who shared those beliefs. Verbs included "cleanse, consume, fill, perfect, restore, sanctify, wash." Adjectives and adverbs encompassed "all, every, full, inbred, no more, perfect, spotless." And nouns comprised "blood, fire, fountain, glory, love, peace, power, rest, sin, salvation, victory, waves."[19]

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17 Kenneth W. Osbeck, *101 More Hymn Stories* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1985), 136.

18 See Robert G. McCutchan, "Lewis Hartsough": https://hymnary.org/person/Hartsough_Lewis; accessed March 16, 2019. The hymn may be found in *Baptist Hymnal* (1991), 302.

19 Wilhoit, "American Holiness Hymnology," 40–41.

Wilhoit uses this hymn to illustrate the typical holiness use of words and images, conveying critical doctrinal content to the singer in community. "Wash me, cleanse me in the blood," the singer pleads in the repeated chorus. The sinner who is "weak and vile" must become "spotless all, and pure." Jesus fulfills every promise. The hymn concludes:

> All hail, redeeming blood!
> All hail, life-giving grace!
> All hail, the gift of Christ our Lord,
> Our strength and righteousness (4:1-4).

George Bennard (1873–1958) supported his widowed mother by working in the mines, following in his father's footsteps.[20] Converted at a Salvation Army gathering in Lucas, Iowa, however, he and his wife served together in that holiness tradition before he entered into a ministry among the Methodists as an itinerant evangelist. Bennard wrote more than three hundred hymns; his signature "**Old Rugged Cross**" (UMH 504) achieved unparalleled popularity and remains a well-known holiness song. The third verse veils the holiness theme:

> In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
> a wondrous beauty I see,
> for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
> to pardon and sanctify me.
>
> Refrain:
> So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
> till my trophies at last I lay down;
> I will cling to the old rugged cross,
> and exchange it some day for a crown.

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960) was converted under the preaching of Henry Clay Morrison, the Methodist holiness evangelist and founder of Asbury College and Seminary. Ordained to the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1903, Chisholm authored some 1,200 devotional poems, 800 of which were set to music as hymns.

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20 On his life and work, see Bert Polman, "George Bennard," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/g/george-bennard; accessed October 15, 2018.

Many of his compositions reflect the gospel song heritage with holiness themes, but Chisholm also represents something of a return in the early twentieth century to a more traditional hymn style. His most famous hymn, "**Great Is Thy Faithfulness**" (UMH 140) became popular from its use in the Billy Graham Crusades, as sung by George Beverly Shea who first introduced it in the 1954 crusade in Great Britain. According to Diana Sanchez, "Of all the hymns in the hymnal of the Evangelical United Brethren Church that were not in *The Book of Hymns*, this was the one most often requested for inclusion in *The United Methodist Hymnal*."[21]

Written in 1923, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness" was set to music by another Methodist minister and music editor associated with Moody Bible Institute, William Runyan (1870–1957). "This particular poem," Runyan reminisced, "held such an appeal that I prayed most earnestly that my tune might carry over its message in a worthy way, and the subsequent history of its use indicates that God answered prayer."[22] Based on Lamentations 3:22-23, this song from the pen of a holiness author exemplifies the power of text perfectly aligned with music. "The subtle changes in harmony and the solemnity of the melody amplify the text," Hawn observes, "bringing the climax on the word 'faithfulness' perfectly at the end of the refrain."[23] In ways that are subtle, Chisholm helped refocus the theological conception of holiness on the majesty of God in whose presence pardon for sin and a peace—the twin dimensions of holiness—endure. As the two great hymnologists Harry Eskew and Hugh McElrath observe, this hymn is "one of the few gospel hymns addressed to God rather than to one's fellowman."[24]

3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
   Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;

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21 Diana Sanchez, ed., *The Hymns of The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 63.

22 Cited by C. Michael Hawn in "History of Hymns: 'Great Is Thy Faithfulness,'" Discipleship Ministries of The United Methodist Church: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-great-is-thy-faithfulness; accessed March 17, 2019.

23 Hawn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness."

24 Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 182.

Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Refrain:
Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

The holiness hymns as part of the gospel song legacy focused attention on human sin and salvation through Christ but recovered a critical dimension of Methodist theology—holiness. These hymn writers redressed the imbalance that "gave primary attention to conversion, and much less to sanctification," to use Tom Langford's phrase; but the theology of holiness embedded in these songs troubled many who considered their vision to be a departure from John Wesley's view.[25] In particular, Methodist theologians such as Nathan Bangs considered this new vision of holiness—particularly Palmer's shorter way—to be mechanical, predictable, and too simple. But the holiness songs continued to shape the lives of countless Methodists, and still do.

25 Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 94.

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Charles A. Tindley

Lyrical Theologian of Black "Soul Echoes"

The metaphor of soundings used in the subtitle of this book might be more applicable to the lyrical theology of the Methodist African American community than to any other. In *Deep River* the Quaker spiritual writer Howard Thurman describes his indebtedness to the Negro spiritual of that name—his favorite.

> Deep River, my home is over Jordan;
> Deep River, my home is over Jordan.
> O don't you want to go to that Gospel Feast
> That Promised Land where all is Peace?
> Deep River, I want to cross over into camp ground.

During a conversation we shared, Thurman told me that he was particularly drawn to the imagery of a river. For him, life was like a river—always flowing, always in process, always on its way. He told me that whenever you hear folks singing this song, you get caught up in the contagion of its rhythmic pulse, swept along as an individual in the current of a great, spiritual, pilgrim community. This is the gift and the theological insight the black community offers to the church, and the songs of the African diaspora have shaped the Methodist tradition in substantial ways.

Early Black Voices in American Methodism

Richard Allen (1760–1831), born into slavery in Philadelphia, eventually bought his freedom and became a major figure in early American Methodism. In 1787, when he and other "Africans" were asked to move from their seats at St. George's Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, he formed his own black Methodist congregation, eventually founding the African Methodist Episcopal Church in which he served as its first bishop. His primary contribution to black song was his compilation of *A Collection of Spiritual Songs and Hymns*. Published in Philadelphia in 1801, it was the first African American hymnal produced by and for black Methodists. This entrepreneurial collection of fifty-four sacred songs was little known until Eileen Southern published an exhaustive study of this amazing resource.[1] She praised it, not only for its unique status, but for its "wandering choruses" attached to classic hymns—sometimes described as "blackened" hymns—for its inclusion of songs from oral tradition, and for the editorial work, much of it Allen's, that made the texts more accessible. Theologically, this hymnbook presented "plain words for plain people," following the lead of John Wesley.

Leaders in the parallel African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church shared this same spirit and engaged in parallel activities in which they formulated the basic doctrines of their theology in simple song. Jon Michael Spencer describes the ethos that shaped their efforts:

> The hymns by the Zion ministers were Methodist in theology, classic and evangelistic in language, and centered around such topics as faith, endurance, crucifixion, resurrection, sanctification, and salvation. In short, they poeticized the temporality of this life and the eternal verities of the afterlife. . . . Nearly all of the hymns had a strong heavenward bent in their tendency to portray heaven as the eternal alternative to the world of perpetual sorrow.[2]

1 Eileen Southern, *The Music of Black Americans: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971).

2 Jon Michael Spencer, *Black Hymnody: A Hymnological History of the African-American Churches* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992), 30–31.

Spencer uses a hymn of Bishop Singleton T. Jones (d.c.1892) to depict the "vale of tears" through which "life's pilgrims roam" on their journey to the "promised land." While the compilation of hymnbooks was the primary contribution of both the AME and AMEZ Churches, the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, founded in 1870 in the South after the Civil War, produced some noteworthy hymn writers.

Lucius H. Holsey (1842–1920) composed a hymn—a signature text sometimes styled the "Hymn of Christian Methodists"—which illustrates the eschatological dimension of his theology:

> **O rapturous scenes that wait the day**,
> When Thou shall call me home,
> When I shall here no longer stay,
> No longer weep and moan.

"My soul shall rise and fly, / To that bright world above," Holsey sings; "The heav'nly Canaan in the sky, / The city of Thy love."[3] In addition to this "otherworldly" dimension of his song, he also demonstrates concern for what he called the "whole-soul" nature of black song.

Fayette Montgomery (F. M.) Hamilton (1858–1912) was the most prolific among the CME hymn writers. In 1904 he compiled the *Songs of Love and Mercy* songbook, in which he published Bishop Holsey's famous hymn. Hamilton contributed the texts or music to fifty-four pieces in this collection. The theme of heaven dominates his poetry as well—that "land beyond the swelling tide."

> **There's a happy day soon coming**, and the time will not be long,
> When we all shall join together in one grand glorious song,
> Singing with the holy angels in the bright forevermore,
> In that blessed land of promise, Over on the other shore.[4]

Black Gospel Music

In his "Historical Account of the Hymn in the Black Worship Experience," Jefferson Cleveland marks a turning point related to song

3 Cited in Spencer, *Black Hymnody*, 46.

4 Cited in Spencer, *Black Hymnody*, 53.

in the black Methodist community. "Not until the beginning of the twentieth century," he observes, "do we see the emerging of Blacks who became prolific as hymn writers in the Afro-American style."[5] This next generation actually produced a new genre known as the black gospel song or hymn, later styled black gospel music. Wyatt Tee Walker places this development within the larger context of black history in America. With its roots sunk deeply in African soil, black song evolved through various stages in a context of slavery, oppression, and eventual emancipation. In his groundbreaking study of black sacred music and social change, Walker discerned at least five developmental stages: slave utterances, Negro spirituals, metered hymns, hymn improvisation, and black gospel song.[6] Black gospel is "a message of good tidings," Thomas Dorsey once said, "expounded by one who has walked the path of trouble and hard times."[7]

According to Paul Schilling, the theology that emerges from these songs falls into five interrelated categories: trust in God, Jesus as guide and Savior, response to life's struggles, right relationship with God, and eternal joy in heaven.[8] Moreover, Schilling describes four positive ways in which black gospel songs enabled the victims of injustice to deal with their afflictions.[9] First, singing these songs provided a way to vent the worry, fear, and tension of everyday life. Second, the hymns deepened their sense of personal dignity, worth, and self-respect. Third, they strengthened the black community's awareness of its unity and cultural identity. Finally, the black gospel songs were a powerful source of emotional support and spiritual power for persons committed to social change.

The poignant theological insight of black gospel music emerges from what Sister Thea Bowman describes as "the crucible of

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5 J. Jefferson Cleveland, "An Historical Account of the Hymn in the Black Worship Experience," *Songs of Zion: Supplemental Worship Resources 12* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), np.

6 See Wyatt Tee Walker, *"Somebody's Calling My Name": Black Sacred Music and Social Change* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1979), 380.

7 Alfred Duckett, "An Interview with Thomas A. Dorsey," *Black World* 23, 9 (July 1974): 13.

8 S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 187–91.

9 Schilling, *The Faith We Sing*, 193–95.

separation and suffering."[10] These songs articulate the understanding of God in the black community based upon their own experience—an experience, as William McClain explains, "in which they have groped for meaning, relevance, worth, assurance, reconciliation, and their proper response to the God revealed in nature and in Jesus Christ."[11] In black gospel music, lyrical theology comes to life, as this description by McClain so ably demonstrates.

> The gospel song expresses . . . a *theology of experience*—the theology of a God who sends the sunshine and the rain, the theology of a God who is very much alive and active and who has not forsaken those who are poor and oppressed and unemployed. It is a *theology of imagination*—it grew out of fire shut up in the bones, of words painted on the canvas of the mind. Fear is turned to hope in the sanctuaries and storefronts and bursts forth in songs of celebration. It is a *theology of grace* that allows the faithful to see the sunshine of His face—even through their tears. Even the words of an ex-slave trader become a song of liberation and an expression of God's amazing grace. It is a *theology of survival* that allows a people to celebrate the ability to continue the journey in spite of the insidious tentacles of racism and oppression and to sing, "It's another day's journey, and I'm glad about it!"[12]

Charles A. Tindley proclaimed good news through a body of hymnody that illustrates all these elements of a theology of black "soul echoes."

A Lyrical Theologian of Black "Soul Echoes"

Charles A. Tindley (1851–1933) inaugurated this new genre of gospel song, reflecting the tribulations and triumphs of his African American heritage.[13] Born of parents in Maryland who lived close to slavery, this self-educated "prince of preachers" attracted so many people by

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10 Thea Bowman, "Preface," in *Lead Me, Guide Me: The African American Catholic Hymnal* (Chicago: G.I.A. Press, 1987), ii.

11 William B. McClain, in *Songs of Zion* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), ix.

12 McClain, *Songs of Zion*, x.

13 See Ralph H. Jones, *Charles Albert Tindley: Prince of Preachers* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982); cf. Carlton Young, "Charles Albert Tindley,"

means of street preaching and community activities to his Methodist church in Philadelphia that a new sanctuary seating three thousand had to be constructed in 1924. This church, later renamed Tindley Temple in his honor, was heralded at the time as the largest Methodist church in the world with more than twelve thousand members. As he began to experiment with this new form of the gospel hymn, he quickly moved away from the formulaic aspects of the white revivalist composers, incorporating elements from his African heritage.

In 1901 Tindley published the first collection of his black gospel music, *Songs of Paradise*, a songbook marked by clear melodies, simple harmonies, and the stanza-refrain pattern of the Negro spirituals. He earned his reputation as a song writer initially from the hymns "Stand by Me" (1905) and "Heaven's Christmas Tree" (1915), sung widely in the black church. Having had no formal musical training, Tindley dictated his own tunes and gradually expanded his body of hymnody in *Soul Echoes* (1909). His hope with regard to this new collection was that "songs of Hope, Cheer, Love and Pity" would enable the singers to "sink to the depths of sorrow and rise to the heights of joy"; that they would "float from soul to soul until the hills and valleys shall awake into joyful singing."[14] The songbook sold out in a month.[15] The UMH includes five of Tindley's hymns set to his own tunes.

"Nothing Between" (373)
"Stand by Me" (512)
"Leave It There" (522)
"Beams of Heaven as I Go" (524)
"We'll Understand It Better By and By" (525)

An earlier supplemental resource, *Songs of Zion* (1981), includes seven additional Tindley hymns. In 2006, S T Kimbrough Jr. and Carlton Young produced a definitive edition of all the published Tindley compositions entitled *Beams of Heaven*.

Canterbury Dictionary: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/c/charles-albert-tindley; accessed October 8, 2018.

14 Cited in Spencer, *Black Hymnody*, 36.

15 S T Kimbrough Jr. and Carlton R. Young, eds., *Beams of Heaven: Hymns of Charles Albert Tindley* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries 2006), iii.

The context of oppression and discrimination out of which Tindley wrote shaped his theology and his hymns in ways unique to the black experience. Like Howard Thurman, nearly half a century his junior, Tindley's life was so deeply influenced by the genius of the Negro spiritual that the crucible of his oppressed ancestors could not help but spill over into his own life and work. The theology of his hymns reflects his own battles against disillusionment, despair, and the vicissitudes of American history. Kimbrough brings this influence into focus with remarkable clarity:

> In this eloquent poet-pastor-musician one experiences a lyrical theology that holds in tension the anxieties of oppression with the vision of a better world, both here and now and beyond. His metaphors, similes, imagery, biblical allusions, and folk expressions are those with which African Americans may readily identify; and yet, his hymns have reached far beyond one group of people to the larger Christian community.[16]

In a more recent article, Kimbrough produced the first thorough examination of "The Lyrical Theology of Charles Albert Tindley," analyzing his hymn corpus through the lens of a variety of theological topics and providing a richly textured portrait of his contextual setting.[17] He explores the views of Tindley on God, grace, the Bible, witness and mission, the world, nature, saints, life's challenges, and social justice.

My own examination of the complete collection of Tindley's hymns reveals a lyrical theologian with three primary foci: the pilgrim way of suffering—a reflection of the experience of the black community (personal holiness); the goal of heaven—a countervision to the dangers, toils, and storms of this life (apocalyptic hope); and the salvation of Jesus—a celebration of intimacy with an "elder

16 Kimbrough and Young, *Beams of Heaven*, iii.

17 S T Kimbrough Jr., "The Lyrical Theology of Charles Albert Tindley: Justice Come of Age," in *Readings in African American Church Music and Worship*, Volume 2, ed. James Abbington (Chicago: GIA Pub., 2014), 2:201-26.

brother" and the joy and liberation of his salvation (moral transformation of evil by love).[18]

The Pilgrim Way

Tindley applies the metaphor of pilgrimage or "life on the way" in at least seven of his forty-six hymns.

> Ye pilgrims through this vale of tears,
> Come let us cheer each other,
> Amid the danger's doubts and fears,
> Let each console his brother,
> Our way is often dark and hard,
> Temptations all around us,
> Unless we pray with one accord,
> They surely will confound us (1:1).[19]

This pilgrimage necessitates a community of encouragement, support, consolation, and prayer. No one travels alone. The fourth stanza of this hymn identifies the critical guidance provided through God's Word:

> There may be some that's growing tired,
> Because the way is tedious,
> Let's take this Book that was inspired
> And tell them more 'bout Jesus (1:4:1-4).

Tindley's pilgrims turn to the One who is the way. He reminds the singer that God is always for, and never against, the pilgrim. All can travel with confidence and the assurance of God's grace:

> Go, ye humble pilgrim stranger,
> Through this world of woe,
> You may meet with many a danger,
> Everywhere you go.
> Don't forget that God above you,
> Hath a gracious heart,

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18 The three parenthetical phrases are the themes distilled by Carlton Young from Tindley's sermons and verse, in Carlton R. Young, *Companion to The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 606.

19 Parenthetical notations refer to the hymn number:stanza:lines of the text as found in Kimbrough and Young, *Beams of Heaven*.

He will never cease to love you,
Or to take your part (2:1).

Tindley describes this pilgrimage, as did the earliest Christian disciples, as "the way." In a pensive hymn, "I often wonder why it is," the repetitive lines of the chorus reflect the deep yearning of the heart to find a secure pathway, despite the darkness and difficulties that stand in the way: "It may be the best for me," the pilgrim sings, "The Lord knows the way" (10:2-3). If a congregation sings through all eight stanzas and choruses of "The hills of life," they sing "The Lord will make the way" nearly thirty times. The closing verses conclude with the assurance, "He will lead the way" (12:7:4) and, ultimately, "For Christ will be the way" (12:8:4). Perhaps Dietrich Bonhoeffer's exposure to black gospel music during his days of worship in the African American communities of Harlem later enabled him to pray: "I don't understand your ways, but you know the way for me."[20]

Four of the five Tindley hymns included in the UMH are located in the section entitled "Strength in Tribulation." They all describe the suffering, struggle, and storms of life. In the most famous among these, his signature text, the tempest-tossed singer pleads:

1. **When the storms of life are raging,**
Stand by me; (stand by me)
When the storms of life are raging,
Stand by me. (stand by me)
When the world is tossing me,
Like a ship upon the sea,
Thou who rulest wind and water,
Stand by me. (stand by me).

"The Tindley hymns (which are congregational songs) admonish those who suffer the storms of life to stand fast in Christ," observe Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya. "They are also addressed to helping the oppressed to survive *this* world."[21] Tindley's masterful use of language portrays the struggles and dangers in life. He

20 George Appleton, *The Oxford Book of Prayer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 163.

21 C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 360.

describes the world as confused, confounded, and dark; filled with murmuring, slander, and abuse, with "Old Satan" hard at work to hide the evil and beguile God's children (35). But the chorus pulls the singer back from the brink in hopes that "After awhile, / After awhile, / The Lord will change our station, / After awhile." With regard to "Leave it there" (20), William Farley Smith observes that "the entire hymn bears out God's promise never to leave us alone."[22] As we live out our lives in solidarity with "Our Suffering Jesus," we bear witness to the proclamation of his death that leads to resurrection and life:

> A few more suffering days below,
> Just like Jesus we'll be buried, Hallelujah.
> But in a coming day, I know,
> Up to heaven we'll be carried, Hallelujah (42:7:1-4).

Beams of Heaven

Tindley's vision of heaven represents the antithesis of suffering in this world. One of his "pilgrim" hymns celebrates the goal toward which the journey moves: "I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow, / Cast out in this wide world to roam," the pilgrim sings, "I hear of a city called Heaven, / I've started to make it my home" (33:1:1-2, 7-8). Like virtually all composers in the gospel hymn tradition, the language of heaven dominates these compositions. More than one in four songs reference heaven in one way or another. The idea of the destination itself draws the singer onward and upward: "I have a home in heaven above, / I'm going there, I'm going there" (6: chorus). "Beams of Heaven" (11) describes Tindley's vision, but no hymn paints a more lavish portrait of heaven than "I'm on my way to heaven above" (23): where all are free from care in a land of rest and perfect love; where joy abounds without a tear and none are sick with feeble frame; where no sad and downcast soul can be found; where perfect health and youth remain; where no beggars roam the streets, no blind grope in the dark, no funeral train disturbs the peace; where death is utterly cast out; where no children grieve dead parents; where no weeping mourners fill the silence with their tears; where

22 Diana Sanchez, ed., *The Hymns of The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 179.

none are denied the freedom of the land; and where no parting word or sad farewell must be spoken, for all are happy all the time.[23]

One of Tindley's most popular hymns, "By and By," was composed during a difficult period in his life.[24] His masterful use of language and imagery fuses personal anguish and profound trust in God in a remarkable and unforgettable manner—in a way that acknowledges the mystery of life:

1. We are often tossed and driven on the restless sea of time,
   Somber skies and howling tempest oft succeeds a bright sunshine,
   In that land of perfect day, When the mists have rolled away.
   We will understand it better by and by.

   Chorus:
   By and by, when the morning comes,
   All the saints of God are gathered home,
   We'll tell the story how we've overcome,
   For we'll understand it better by and by.

2. We are often destitute of the things that life demands,
   Want of shelter and of food, thirsty hills and barren lands.
   We are trusting in the Lord, and according to His word,
   We will understand it better by and by (18).

Tindley describes this "land of rest and perfect love" as "A better home" (17), "The home of the soul" (26), that place in which "I'll be satisfied" (27), and a "Mountain top dwelling" (37). "Someone is waiting for me" (9) there, he sings. Best of all, in this realm in which God's love rules,

> Christ our Lord shall listen
> To every plaintive sigh,
> And stretch His hand o'er every land
> In justice by and by (40:1:5-8).

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23 See also "There is a land that is free" (24), a hymn replete with many of these same images.

24 See discussion of this hymn in Young, *Companion*, 684–85.

The Salvation of Jesus

The final theological theme in these hymns focuses attention on the person and work of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, in E. T. Tindley's story of his father's life, based on eleven of his hymns, half of these compositions fall into this category—what I will call "Jesus hymns."[25] "Christ is the way" (16) in exaltation, in self-denial, when others wronged him, while the soldiers tied him, and amid afflictions. All the responses of Jesus to the reality of his own suffering make intimate friendship with Christ possible. Tindley describes Jesus as our "elder brother" with whom we can share our brokenness, sadness, loneliness, and burdens. "Go, talk with Jesus about it" (43), he enjoins, for "You cannot find another / Who cares as much for you" (chorus). In "He'll take you through" (28) he demonstrates the trustworthiness of Jesus as a guide. The hymn "Let Jesus fix it for you" (30) guides the singer through the perplexities of life in which intimacy with God in Christ brings resolution and peace—"your hand in His." Jesus is the One who "has promised to provide for me" (34: chorus).

Jesus offers friendship, joy, and freedom. None of Tindley's compositions celebrates intimacy with Jesus more than his classic "Nothing between" (5)—one of his five hymns included in the UMH (373). He teaches us in this hymn, claims W. F. Smith, "to clear the path in order to make the soul and Savior one."[26] Tindley emphasizes the interior life and the necessity of participation in Christ who dwells within. The chorus celebrates this intimate friendship:

> Nothing between my soul and the Savior
> So that His blessed face may be seen,
> Nothing preventing the least of His favor,
> Keep the way clear! Let nothing between.

In his hymn "I have found at last a Savior," the elements of joy and freedom coalesce:

> O the joy that comes to me,
> And the power that makes me free,

25 E. T. Tindley, *The Prince of Colored Preachers: The Remarkable Story of Charles Albert Tindley* (Flint, MI: Schultz Printing Co., 1942).

26 Sanchez, *Hymns,* 132.

My soul is filled with praises,
'Tis the year of Jubilee (13:1:5-8).

For Tindley, joy comes when "God makes things right." Perhaps the words of W. E. B. DuBois echoed in his soul: "Through all the sorrow of the sorrow songs, there breathes a hope—a faith in the ultimate justice of things."[27] From Tindley's perspective, "the God of justice and the God of Jesus is on the side of the oppressed," claims Cleveland. "That is the heart of the Bible and the fulcrum of liberation."[28] While he could sing about a heaven by and by, Tindley never abandoned hope in the power of God's love to transform an unjust world here and now.

Salvation means freedom from sin. "When I read the words of Jesus, and the teachings of St. Paul, / There I found a promised freedom from the guilt of Adam's fall" (41:2:3-4). Redemption entails freedom from the fear of God's judgment. "I am free from condemnation, / Jesus' blood has made me free" (21:1:1-2). The chorus reiterates the central theme: "I believe it, Jesus died to set me free." Victory comes in this life for those who align themselves with Christ and his way. "In His name I'll win the victory, / With His word the conqueror's sign" (13:4:3-4). "If my Father holds my hand, I can keep the narrow way, / If my Father holds my hand, I can never go astray" (19:2:1-2). Tindley's hymns move seamlessly from this kind of intimate language to the images and language of battle. "Tindley's hymns stress the personal aspect of God's grace that saves from sin," claims Kimbrough, "but clearly hoped for a better day when justice would be established throughout the earth."[29]

Carlton Young has demonstrated how excerpts from his most powerful hymn of liberation and victory, "This world is one great battlefield" (14), were possibly used in forming the anthem of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, "We shall overcome."[30] The words of the refrain reveal that potential connection: "I'll overcome someday" evolve into that banner slogan. Lincoln and Mamiya argue that this hymn is "not simply other-worldly"; rather, it addresses the

27 W. E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folks* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1970), 253.

28 Cleveland, *Songs of Zion*, np.

29 Kimbrough, "Lyrical Theology of Tindley," 209, 223.

30 Young, *Companion*, 679–80.

concerns and needs of the oppressed who seek freedom now.[31] So, understandably, with regard to redemption, Tindley draws imagery from the slavery that held his people in bondage for so long. In his refrain to "One day, a wayward boy" (36) he alludes to the rope by which the slave was bound and celebrates the freedom that Jesus secures for those in bondage: "A Stranger cut the rope, / It was my only hope," cries the liberated boy; "A Stranger heard my helpless cry, / And cut the fatal string."

Charles A. Tindley established a new lyrical genre that continues to shape the theology of Methodists today. His black gospel music communicates a theology beyond the force of his words. "Black gospel hymnody in particular, cannot be adequately studied from a printed page;" explain Eskew and McElrath, "the musical score provides only a skeleton which when clothed through embellishment and other variations in performance, assumes a form that has an expressive character of its own."[32] Tindley was a masterful communicator who bound his theology to this powerful lyrical form. While honest about the centrality of suffering in the story of his people—their crucible—the theology of his hymns also strikes a note of hope about a social gospel that can transform the world—their resurrection.

31 Lincoln and Mamiya, *Black Church,* 360.

32 Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 184.

6

Emerging Social and Global Consciousness

Developments following the American Civil War presented challenges to Methodist theologians as the church stood on the threshold of a new century. Changing attitudes about the Bible, new philosophical perspectives, unresolved problems related to racism and social injustice, and the waning of revivalistic evangelism in an age of respectability demanded a robust response from the church.[1] Within the life of the church, some of the seismic shifts in Western culture, as well, shaped the response of Christians to these concerns. Methodist lyrical theology of this period reflects three movements, in particular: an increasingly positive view of the world (a movement from otherworldliness to this-worldliness); a developing concept of vocation (a movement from passivity to activity in the world); and the application of Christian ethics to economics (a movement from symptomatic relief to systemic reform).

Boston Personalism and the social gospel movement emerged within Methodism, both of which sought to elevate human experience, freedom, and responsibility and to demonstrate the implications of theology for social ethics. Through their influence, the opening decades of the twentieth century witnessed an increasing emphasis on social and global consciousness. While black gospel music aligned well with and even helped to shape this new,

1 See Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 110.

emerging perspective, a critique of what some considered to be the myopic and individualistic legacy of the gospel song, and to some extent a similar ethos in the later holiness hymns, accompanied these theological reformulations.

Theological Critique of Gospel and Holiness Songs

In his analysis of hymnody and Christian belief, Paul Schilling articulated the following critique of the gospel hymn and its implicit theology:

> Linked to the extreme individualism of the gospel hymns is their almost exclusively otherworldly understanding of Christian hope. Concentrating on the joys of the life to come they ignore the positive values attainable here and now and the responsibility Christians have for realizing them. Songs that merely point people to the skies play directly into the hands of the Marxist claim that religion is only an opiate. It is one thing to remind suffering, dispirited persons of their eternal destiny; it is quite another to neglect mentioning the possibilities open to them, however limited, for a fuller life in this world.[2]

Proponents of gospel songs stressed the evangelism, individual salvation, and personal faith aligned with "conservative" evangelicalism. Those who embraced the "new, liberal perspective" advocated theological rigor, attentiveness to shifting intellectual trends, and social consciousness and action. Van Dyken argues that "the tension between the two strands . . . was played out in battles over denominational hymnals."[3] These disputes divided churches and their singers within them in relation to the divergent liberal and conservative trajectories of their vision.

Mel Wilhoit observes that "in official Methodist hymnals, whether the influential 1878 *Methodist Hymnal* with Ritual or the 1905 joint *Hymnal* of the Methodist Episcopal Church (North and

2 S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 183.

3 Tamara J. Van Dyken, "Worship Wars, Gospel Hymns, and Cultural Engagement in American Evangelicalism, 1890–1940," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 27, 2 (Summer 2017): 196.

South), 19th-century Holiness hymn writers—the ones who established the genre—seemed conspicuous by their absence. In fact, there was downright opposition to their songs in some quarters."[4] The dissent was both theological and institutional. Nathan Bangs—arguably one of the most significant Methodist theologians of the nineteenth century—found it necessary, for example, to speak out against Phoebe Palmer's "shorter way to holiness." He considered it to be an aberration of authentic Wesleyan teaching, so he questioned the hymnody associated with her movement, one reason why much of it was jettisoned from official hymnals. A number of new holiness denominations—the Church of the Nazarene, the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Free Methodist Church, and the Salvation Army, in particular—spun out of Methodism in the nineteenth century, creating a holiness hymnody of their own. Including their hymns in a Methodist repertoire was problematic, obviously, on an institutional level. Regardless, the rise of Boston Personalism and the social gospel movement provided a positive impetus for the composition of hymns that embodied the new theological consciousness in the opening decades of the twentieth century.

Boston Personalism and the Social Gospel

In the Methodist tradition a form of classic theological liberalism emerged at Boston University School of Theology under the influence of Border Parker Bowne in the late nineteenth century. This movement came to be known as *Boston Personalism*. Bowne's efforts to defend the Christian faith "led to an appreciation of the positive value of biblical criticism, a more optimistic evaluation of human nature, and an intellectual interpretation that could contend with the significant intellectual issues of the time."[5] His theological program revolved around the concept of "Personhood" as the key to reality. The potency of his thought, as Langford has argued, "led Methodist theology to the possibility of a new and different path."[6] A half century later it served as the foundation for the work of Dr. Martin

4 Mel R. Wilhoit, "Holiness hymnody, USA," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/h/holiness-hymnody,-usa; accessed October 16, 2018.

5 Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 120.

6 Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 121.

Luther King Jr. "Personalism's insistence that only personality—finite and infinite—is ultimately real," he wrote, "strengthened me in two convictions; it gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality."[7] Albert Cornelius Knudson, the great systematic theologian of Boston Personalism, characterized evolving Methodist liberalism in six terse points: the centrality of Christian experience, the immanence of God, the true humanity of Jesus, critical study of the Bible, atonement as moral influence, and a positive sense that the kingdom of God is being realized in history.[8]

Knudson's final point found contemporary expression in the social gospel movement in which Methodism figured prominently as well. Pioneered by Washington Gladden (a Congregationalist), and popularized by the Baptist Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (1907), this movement sought to reclaim the centrality of the "kingdom of God" in Christian theology and practice. Rauschenbusch claimed that anyone who separates the personal, religious life from the social life has misunderstood Jesus. He called for nothing less than a theological reconstruction of the mainline church.[9] In his blueprint for the movement, *A Theology of the Social Gospel*, he argued:

> The individualistic gospel has taught us to see the sinfulness of every human heart and has inspired us with faith in the willingness and power of God to save every soul that comes to him. But it has not given us an adequate understanding of the sinfulness of the social order and its share in the sins of all individuals within it.[10]

The "social gospelers," as they were called, sought to apply the principles of Jesus' ministry to the transformation of society, to

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7 Martin Luther King Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), 100.

8 See Albert C. Knudson, *The Philosophy of Personalism: A Study in the Metaphysics of Religion* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1927).

9 On this theme, see Carlton R. Young, *Companion to The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 30–33.

10 Walter Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1917), 5.

establish a new social order by eliminating the social evils of poverty and racism in particular. In 1908 the Methodist Episcopal Church produced a "Social Creed" that gave official sanction to these ideas and also reclaimed the inherent relationship between personal piety and social action in the Wesleyan tradition. A significant body of hymnody arose out of this movement and provided lyrical advocacy for its theology and vision.

The theology of social and global consciousness that characterized these hymns exerted a monumental influence in Methodism throughout the course of the twentieth century. "The social gospel hymn is as optimistic about the perfectibility of humankind as the gospel hymn," observes Carlton Young, "with the city replacing heaven as the work place of God's grace."[11] This fact, in and of itself, reveals something of a growing fissure within the tradition. As the twentieth century dawned, the stage was set for a confrontation between those who emphasized the personal dimension of salvation in Christ—Methodist evangelicals who stood squarely in the tradition of gospel songs—and Methodist liberals who increasingly elevated God's work in the redemption of the social order. Simply to illustrate this divide, in 1905 Methodists (North and South) jointly published an official *Methodist Hymnal*, which contained very few gospel hymns, later leading to the counter publication of *The Cokesbury Hymnal* that was packed with gospel songs. Similarly, in Britain the *English Hymnal* of 1906 swept away many of the individualistic and evangelistic Victorian favorites, incorporating hymns that shifted attention to multiple social concerns.[12] Contemporaries aptly described these hymns as "we" rather than "I" hymns—"this-worldly" in their orientation rather than "otherworldly"—concerned just as much about the redemption of the social order as individuals.

Four Methodist composers in the United States represented this synthesis of liberal and social gospel teaching in the twentieth century: Frank Mason North, Georgia Harkness, Leon Adkins, and William Watkins Reid Jr. Six of their hymns are included in the UMH, four of these located in the section on "Social Holiness." The theology of these hymns reflects the confluence of social justice,

11 Young, *Companion*, 30.

12 Fred Kimball Graham, "'Practical' and 'Experimental': A Survey of English Language Hymnody in the Modern Age," *Touchstone* 33, no. 1 (February 2015): 26–39.

mission, global vision, and the immanence and activity of God in the human struggle.

A Lyrical Theology of Social and Global Consciousness

Frank Mason North (1850–1935) was born in New York City, was ordained into the Methodist ministry in 1872, and devoted most of his life to mission work in the great city that he loved.[13] A man of many talents and interests, he immediately emerged as an important leader of the ecumenical movement and a strong advocate for social justice, especially in the areas of women's rights, child labor laws, and organized labor. Deeply concerned about the relationship of the Christian faith to the urban context, he helped launch and edit the periodical *The Christian City* (1892–1912). The Hymn Society of America, of which North was a charter member, published nine of his hymns in 1970. He personified the social gospel movement, and his hymns became a primary instrument in the promotion of its theology and vision.

"The middle ground is the only true one," North once remarked during the early years of his ministry. "The evangelist and humanitarian must come together."[14] His biographer observes:

> It was this personal religion that distinguished Frank Mason North's social gospel from that of many of his contemporaries and those who came after him. . . . During twenty years of his career, while Walter Rauschenbusch wrote and taught the social gospel and Washington Gladden preached it, North *was* the city missionary at work.[15]

North held together in creative tension emphases of thought and action often regarded as mutually exclusive, perhaps unconsciously modeling a primary characteristic of the Wesleyan way. Sometimes labeled a "Christian socialist" after the model of the Anglican theologian F. W. Maurice or the Methodist reformer Hugh Price Hughes in England, North's piety and "devotion to Christ as the ultimate

13 On his life and work, see Creighton Lacy, *Frank Mason North: His Social and Ecumenical Mission* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967).

14 Lacey, *Frank Mason North*, 172.

15 Lacey, *Frank Mason North*, 57.

revealer of truth and grace was never in question by those who knew him best."[16]

The memorable poetry of this social gospeler combined depth of feeling with felicity of expression. The titles of his hymns reveal several of the prominent themes of his lived theology: "The Life of Trust," "My Lord, My Life," "With Thee, Our Master and Our Lord," and "The World's Astir!" Deeply Christocentric, his theology celebrated Jesus as "Lord and Master." Trust in him, in North's view, provides the necessary foundation upon which to engage in mission in a broken world—filling the "shadow lands" with Light. Creighton Lacy observes that North's three compositions in the *Methodist Hymnal* of 1935 represent the three important chapters of his life and reflect the theological concerns that dominated each.[17] "The World's Astir!" reveals his lifelong commitment to education and the discipleship of youth. "O Master of the Waking World" discloses the centrality of world mission and North's global vision. "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life," from the initial chapter of his journey, reflects his years of service and commitment to Christian mission in New York City. As reported by Lacy, "North told an interviewer that he kept asking himself two questions, out of the acute problems of city mission work: 'What is the Lord going to do with all these people? What is the Lord going to do to us if we don't do something for them?'"[18]

Originally entitled "A Prayer for the Multitudes," North wrote "**Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life**" in 1903—a signature hymn reflecting his experience of the pressing needs of New York City. It is the only one of his hymns in the UMH (427). Described as "the classic American hymn on the city," it reflected his effort to raise popular consciousness about the concerns of burgeoning urban centers.[19] It also articulated the social gospel that yearns for the New Jerusalem—the realization of God's kingdom on earth. According to Diana Sanchez, North's reflections on Matthew 22:9, "Go therefore

16 Bert Polman, "Frank Mason North," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/f/frank-mason-north; accessed October 15, 2018.

17 Creighton Lacy, "With Minstrel Heart," in *The Hymns of Frank Mason North* (New York: The Hymn Society of America, 1970), 21.

18 Lacy, "With Minstrel Heart," 23.

19 Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 186.

to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find," influenced this composition. "The text enumerates the many needs of people in an urban setting," she writes, "and tells us that Jesus never recoiled from people in desperate need but showed compassion."[20] North appeals for all people to learn the way of Jesus—the way of loving service—until the kingdom of God comes upon the earth.

North paints a perceptive and realistic portrait of the city at the turn of the century—a context of desperation calling for the intervention of the Christian community. In these "crowded ways of life" the air is filled with the "cries of race and clan" and "the noise of selfish strife." In the city, wretchedness, need, fear, the helplessness of children, the grief of women, and the burdened toil of men all evoke the tears of the Savior. North prays for God's immediate action:

5. O Master, from the mountainside
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city's streets again.

6. Till all the world shall learn your love
and follow where your feet have trod,
till, glorious from your heaven above,
shall come the city of our God!

"This hymn has but one mission in the world," North observed in later years, "and that is to help men of all races and conditions better to understand the person and meaning of Jesus Christ."[21]

Georgia Harkness (1891–1974) is one of the few composers of hymns in this study who served the church as a bona fide theologian.[22] Born in 1891, and having completed her PhD in 1923 at Boston University, she taught religion and philosophy at Elmira College and Mount Holyoke College before being appointed the

20 Diana Sanchez, ed., *The Hymns of The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 149–50.

21 Cited in Cynthia Pearl Maus, *Christ and the Fine Arts* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1938), 739.

22 For a full treatment of her life and work, see the definitive biography of Rosemary Skinner Keller, *Georgia Harkness: For Such a Time as This* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992).

first female professor in a major theological seminary. Her work at Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois, one of the major Methodist seminaries at the time, and as an ecumenist with the World Council of Churches, afforded her wide-ranging influence. Immediately following the Second World War, in 1947, Harkness was named one of the ten most influential living Methodists in a national poll taken by *The Christian Advocate*. The recipient of many honorary doctorates and awards, she wrote some thirty books, hundreds of articles, and eighteen hymns.[23] A poet by nature, she published a number of lyrical works including: *Holy Flame* (1935), *The Glory of God* (1943), and *Be Still and Know* (1953). These contained a number of her hymns: "Speak through the living silence," "God of the fertile fields," "Tell it out with gladness," and her most popular and signature text, "Hope of the world." The eminent hymnologist David Music identifies Harkness as one of the two most important American hymn text writers of the second half of the twentieth century.[24]

Described by Rosemary Keller as an "evangelical liberal," Harkness rooted her theology in the rich soil of Personalistic piety, philosophy, theology, and ethics. Her theological perspective mirrored the concerns of classical liberalism: always embracing continuity in the midst of diversity, elevating the importance of human experience, promoting an optimistic view of life, seeking truth wherever it might be found, advocating social justice and change, and centering all things in God. The style of her thought was generous, tolerant, and wide-ranging. Tom Langford offers the following judgment concerning her contribution as a theologian:

> Her use of personalistic philosophy provided the foundation for explication of the Fatherhood of God, Jesus as Lord and example of Christian living, and service to the kingdom of God. Warm, confident, and irenic, Harkness believed there is a unity to knowledge found in faith, reason, and the Bible. Theology, which may begin at any of these points,

23 Deborah C. Loftis, "The Hymns of Georgia Harkness," *The Hymn* 28 (October 1977): 186.

24 David W. Music, *Christian Hymnody in Twentieth-Century Britain and America: An Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 3.

> moves toward the same center—that God is personal and gracious, that Jesus Christ renews human life for its highest achievement, and that the Holy Spirit is the continuing and sustaining expression of God's relation to humankind. There was also a consistent concern for the coming kingdom of God and for Christian responsibility to enable justice and love to prevail. Her style was clear and engaging and her mode of thought general. She understood herself to be an interpreter for the general reader and this responsibility she fulfilled with vigor and felicity. . . . The most impressive characteristics of Harkness' theology were inclusiveness and balance. Never sharp or intentionally provocative, she constantly attempted to draw themes together, to keep many dimensions in relationship to one another, to make a full-orbed presentation of what she called "redemptive evangelical doctrine."[25]

"Tell it out with gladness" reflects Harkness's concern for evangelism, opening with the proclamation of a global mission. She admonishes the disciple of Jesus to listen, heed, obey, and serve him, and to do this through serving others. Harkness was invited to add a third stanza to Lloyd Stone's "This Is My Song," one of her two texts included in the UMH (437). This eloquent poetry reflects her deep and lifelong commitment to Christian pacifism and her quest for unity and peace in a shrinking global community:

> This is my prayer, O Lord of all earth's kingdoms:
> Thy kingdom come; on earth thy will be done.
> Let Christ be lifted up till all shall serve him,
> and hearts united learn to live as one.
> O hear my prayer, thou God of all the nations;
> myself I give thee; let thy will be done.[26]

Commissioned by the Wesleyan Service Guild, the organization adopted this composition as its official hymn, leading to its

25 Langford, *Practical Divinity*, 199.

26 This is stanza 3, penned by Harkness, of Lloyd Stone/Georgia Harkness, "This Is My Song" ©1943 (Stanzas 1 and 2), © 1964 (Stanza 3) Lorenz Publishing Company (admin. by Music Services). All rights reserved. ASCAP.

widespread use.[27] "Tell it out with gladness" is her most exuberant hymn. Eskew and McElrath claim that it was inspired by her most basic Christian belief, "that God's good news should be shared the world over with all persons in order that their lives may be transformed into the abundant life Christ died to give them."[28] This hymn links her view of Jesus' redemptive work with the message of lavish grace and universal application in a global family.

Harkness based the text of her more familiar composition and signature text, "**Hope of the World**" (UMH 178), on the theme of the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches that met in Evanston in August 1954—"Jesus Christ, Hope of the World." The Hymn Society selected her hymn as the theme song for the event, and it was first sung at the opening session of the Assembly. Bert Polman describes the context out of which this great hymn emerged:

> In the wake of the Second World War and the Korean Conflict, the "Cold War" had settled over the earth and the then-new phrase "population bomb" testified to an increasing ecological crisis. Torn internally by denominational strife and continued conservative/liberal controversies, the church attempted to speak and act with Christian convictions to a world which was thoroughly post-Christian in most of its public life.[29] The following three stanzas capture her theology of a social and global conscience:
>
> Hope of the world, thou Christ of great compassion,
> Speak to our hearts by conflict rent.
> Save us, thy people, from consuming passion,
> Who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.
>
> Hope of the world, God's gift from highest heaven,
> Bringing to hungry souls the bread of life,
> Still let thy spirit unto us be given,
> To heal earth's wounds and end all bitter strife.
>
> Hope of the world, who by thy cross didst save us
> From death and dark despair, from sin and guilt,

27 Young, *Companion*, 654.

28 Eskew and McElrath, *Sing with Understanding*, 63.

29 Bert Polman, "Hope of the World," *The Hymn* (April 1991): 37.

> We render back the love thy mercy gave us,
> Take thou our lives, and use them as thou wilt.[30]

Reflecting on this hymn, Rosemary Keller writes:

> Harkness's mature theology of evangelical liberalism is nowhere more fully and succinctly expressed than in the words of this powerful and compassionate hymn. . . . It represents the heart of the social gospel in its prayer that the Spirit be given to the church to make it an instrument "to heal earth's wounds and end all bitter strife." But always the hope is in Christ's presence to forgive, reconcile, save, and direct the ministry of the church and to make it "faithful to thy gospel glorious."[31]

"The first two lines of each stanza describe the ministry and life of Christ," observes Michael Hawn. "The final two lines call for a response from us based on Christ's example."[32] So characteristic of the social gospel, Harkness always moves the singer from faith into a life of action. Like all her hymns, this one concludes with a strong assertion of God's victory.[33] This hymn boldly proclaims that Christians find their hope in Christ who is the hope of the whole human family.

Leon M. Adkins Sr. (1896–1986), a minister and educational executive of the Methodist Church, is remembered primarily for his hymn "**Go, Make of All Disciples**" (UMH 571). In this close lyrical paraphrase of the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20), with its opening command, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations," Adkins paints a portrait of God's global reign. This signature hymn reflects the early twentieth-century vision of global mission sparked by the World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh in 1910 under the triumphalist theme coined by the American Methodist layman John R. Mott—"The Evangelization

30 Words: Georgia Harkness © 1954, Ren. 1982 The Hymn Society (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

31 Keller, *Georgia Harkness*, 280–81.

32 C. Michael Hawn, "History of Hymns: 'Hope of the World,'" Discipleship Ministries: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-hope-of-the-world; accessed March 31, 2019.

33 See the analysis of Loftis, "Hymns of Georgia Harkness," 186–91.

of the World in This Generation." The final stanza reflects the major themes of the social gospel agenda with its fearless obedience to God's call:

> 4. "Go, make of all disciples." We welcome Thy command.
> "Lo, I am with you always." We take Thy guiding hand.
> The task looms large before us; we follow without fear;
> in heaven and earth thy power shall bring God's kingdom here.[34]

William Watkins Reid Jr. (1923–2007) returned from internment as a prisoner in Germany during the Second World War to serve as a pastor of rural and inner-city Methodist churches in Pennsylvania.[35] An extremely gifted poet and lifelong member of The Hymn Society, he published various hymn collections over the years that reflect his commitments to local ministry, Christian education, liturgical renewal, environmental concerns, global mission, peace, and unity: *Fourteen New Rural Hymns*, *Fifteen New Christian Education Hymns* (1959), *Twelve New Lord's Day Hymns* (1968), and *Sixteen New Hymns on the Stewardship of the Environment* (1973). His most famous hymn, "**O God of Every Nation**," included in the UMH (435), came from one of his earliest collections, *Twelve New World Order Hymns* (1958). His composition won first place in a competition in advance of the 1958 National Council of Churches Conference on a New World Order and was first sung there at the height of the Cold War, shortly after a very famous inflammatory speech of Nikita Khrushchev. In the opening stanza of this signature text, Reid reveals his view that peace can only be achieved by acknowledging human interdependence. The impediments to peace and unity include greed and power, nationalism and pride, and trust in military might. Exemplifying the spirit of the social gospel hymn, it concludes by sounding a note of eschatological hope:

> Keep bright in us the vision
> of days when war shall cease,

34 Words by Leon M. Adkins © 1964 Abingdon Press (administered by Music Services) (BMI). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

35 C. Michael Hawn, "History of Hymns: 'O God of Every Nation,'" Discipleship Ministries: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-o-god-of-every-nation; accessed January 22, 2019.

when hatred and division
give way to love and peace,

till dawns the morning glorious
when truth and justice reign,
and Christ shall rule victorious
o'er all the world's domain (4).[36]

36 Words: William Watkins Reid Jr. © 1958 The Hymn Society (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

7

Fred Pratt Green

LYRICAL THEOLOGIAN OF JUBILATION

The term "New English Renaissance" refers to a group of hymn writers and musicians whose work triggered a "hymnic explosion" in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s.[1] The primary concern of this new breed of hymn writer was to use modern English and to relate the Christian faith more fully to modern life. Carlton Young identifies four prominent characteristics these authors shared: the shift in their language base toward metaphors and descriptions found in modern translations of the Bible and revised liturgies; the noticeable impact of science and technology in their themes; the conception of a servant-church called to pilgrimage in a fragile and vulnerable world; and the interface of Christian unity with a global vision of Eucharistic community.[2] Some hymnologists date the beginning of this movement to the publication of "Lord of the Dance" by Sydney Carter (1915–2004) in 1967. From among this distinguished group of innovative lyricists—which included the Congregationalists Erik Routley (1917–1982), Fred Kaan (1929–2009), and Brian Wren (1936–) and the Anglican Timothy Dudley-Smith

1 See Alan Luff, "The Hymn Explosion after 25 Years," *The Hymn* 46 (April 1995): 6–15.

2 Carlton R. Young, *Companion to The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 16.

(1926–)—*Fred Pratt Green* (1903–2000) stands alone as representative of the Methodist tradition.[3]

The Shaping of a Retirement Hymn Writer

Born in 1903, Green once described his parental home as "a place where religion was scrupulously observed but never made burdensome."[4] For four decades, from 1928 to 1969, he served as a faithful Methodist pastor in various appointments across England. In a letter written to Harry Eskew in 1985, Green identified important influences that led to his engagement in hymn composition. His insights merit quotation at length:

> Much of my previous life has been a preparation for hymn writing in retirement and old age. In the first place, my father was a Wesleyan Methodist, my mother an Anglican, and we worshipped during my boyhood, until I was eight or nine, in a parish church; and though I chose Methodism because of the "open table," I have never lost my love of Anglican worship. . . . In the second place, my ministry in Methodism has been exceptionally varied: I served in country and urban circuits, as a school chaplain, as superintendent of the Dome Mission, with its popular evening service attracting over 2,000, and as a Methodist bishop. This means I got to know church life, its needs, problems, and types of worship. . . . Hymn writing has been more than a literary pursuit; it has been a very moving experience, a strengthening of faith, and a broadening of one's love for the People of God. . . . There is no room in such an experience for pride—only for amazement and gratitude to the

3 For biographical information on Green, see Fred Pratt Green, *The Hymns and Ballads of Fred Pratt Green* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Pub. Co., 1982); Fred Pratt Green, *Later Hymns and Ballads and Fifty Poems* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Pub. Co., 1989); and Bernard Braley, *Serving God and God's Creatures: A Memorial Volume to Celebrate the Life of Frederick Pratt Green* (London: Stainer and Bell, 2001).

4 Cited in Bernard Braley, "Introducing Fred Pratt Green," in Green, *Hymns and Ballads*, vii.

> One who leads us where we do not want to go and to do the things we least expected.[5]

In 1982, at its annual meeting in Atlanta, Green was elected a Fellow of The Hymn Society of America. On that occasion he was also awarded an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by Emory University. The citation reads: "You have answered to the Church's need for new songs of love and joy and peace and, in doing so, have replenished our will to courage and unity."[6] In 1994 he received the MBE for his services to hymn writing. "A decade ago, Erik Routley opined Fred as the greatest Methodist hymn writer since Charles Wesley," Carlton Young reminisced in 1979. "In this decade, Fred has become the most significant pastor/poet of the century."[7]

Several influential poets and hymn writers shaped Green's lyrical gift. During World War II Green met Fallon Webb, an agnostic poet, who inspired Green to become serious about his poetic talent. They entered into a compact, each to write a poem as often as possible that they would then critique, a process of mutual learning they enjoyed for nearly twenty years. In 1952 Green published his first collection of poems, *This Unlikely Earth*. Three additional volumes followed over the course of several decades: *The Skating Parson* (1965), *The Old Couple* (1976), and *The Last Lap* (1991). Green met John Wilson in his retirement when he was asked to serve on a committee tasked to prepare a supplement for the British *Methodist Hymn Book* (1933). The committee also asked Green to write hymns to fill some of the gaps in this volume, subsequently published as *Hymns and Songs* in 1969. Wilson, a noteworthy musician always looking for new hymn texts, worked alongside Green in this project and became a source of perennial encouragement. Collaborating closely with him for years, Wilson also helped Green hone his newly adopted craft. In similar fashion, Erik Routley invited Green to help in the preparation of *Cantate Domino* (1974), an international hymnal of the World Council of Churches, exercising a significant influence on him as well and exposing his work to the American context when

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5 Cited in Harry Eskew, "Fred Pratt Green: Retirement Hymnist," *Journal of Church Music* 29, 1 (January 1987): 11–12.

6 Cited in Bernard Braley, "1981 and Beyond," in Green, *Later Hymns*, ix.

7 Carlton R. Young, "Introduction to the Hymns," in Green, *Later Hymns*, v.

he assumed his important position at the Westminster Choir College in Princeton.

The Nature and Range of the Hymn Corpus

Green wrote almost all his hymns in a period of approximately twenty years, from the late 1960s when he retired from the pastoral ministry to the late 1980s. As he would later confess, he wrote his three hundred poems to please himself; he wrote almost as many hymns because someone had asked him for a text for a particular occasion or tune.[8] In 1971 he published his first collection, simply entitled *26 Hymns*. Green's friend and publisher Bernard Braley compiled and edited two collections of his hymns: *The Hymns and Ballads of Fred Pratt Green* (1982), containing 209 texts of which 125 are hymns, and *Later Hymns and Ballads and Fifty Poems* (1989), with 84 additional hymn texts. In 2003, to celebrate the centenary of Green's birth, Braley published a posthumous, definitive edition of 166 hymns and songs, *Partners in Creation*, drawn from these previous collections. Multiple hymnals, supplements, and special collections include significant numbers of Green's hymns.

Hymns and Songs (1969), the primary British Methodist hymnal that inaugurated Green's practice of hymn writing, included seven of his hymns. From among them, "Christ Is the World's Light" became an immediate sensation. The successors to this hymnal, *Hymns and Psalms* (1983) and *Singing the Faith* (2011), included twenty-six and twenty-three of his hymns, respectively. All eighteen of Green's hymns in the American UMH come from *Hymns and Ballads*.[9] To indicate some sense of the breadth of those hymns selected, they are located in fourteen discrete sections of the collection, from "Praise and Thanksgiving" to "Communion of the Saints." Three hymns, the most in any one section, challenge the community of faith "Called to God's Mission." One in four of his hymns (around

8 Bernard Braley, "The Hymns of Fred Pratt Green," *The Expository Times* 114, 12 (September 2003): 410.

9 UMH (1989) #68, 97, 124, 132, 188, 223, 252, 265, 285, 336, 505, 517, 582, 589, 592, 654, 660, 708. All hymns in this chapter are quoted from this source with parenthetical insertions of hymn number, verse, and line(s) as appropriate.

seventy) have found their way into hymnals, anthologies, and collections all around the world.[10]

Green not only wrote his own hymns but provided translations as well. Erik Routley introduced him to this practice with hopes that he might improve texts for the ecumenical collection, *Cantate Domino*. Dietrich Bonhoeffer composed a New Year's hymn of seven stanzas for his friends on the last New Year's Eve of his life in 1944. Unsatisfied with extant translations, Routley asked Green to put his mind to a new and improved version. The power of Green's translation remains unsurpassed. The opening stanza reads:

> By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered,
> And confidently waiting, come what may,
> We know that God is with us night and morning,
> And never fails to greet us each new day (517:1).[11]

Green prepared "All My Hope" from the German text of Joachim Neander, a seventeenth-century Reformed theologian and hymn writer. Unlike earlier translations of this hymn, Green "kept as strictly as possible to Neander's use of imagery."[12] His opening line closely mimics the German original: "All my hope is firmly grounded in the great and living Lord." The hymn concludes with a note of jubilant gratitude: "Thank, O thank, our great Creator, thru God's only Son this day."

In a 1975 article titled "Poet and Hymn Writer," Green affords a glimpse into how he viewed his lyrical vocation.[13] He contrasts his work as a poet with that of a hymn writer.

> The poet, like the mystic, even if he is a firm believer, in his awareness of mystery, in his sense of the unity underlying all existence, is sensitive to other beliefs and interpretations of reality. . . . The hymn writer, in contrast, does not write to please himself. He is a servant of the Church. It is the Church which asks him to write hymns and provides

10 Braley, "Hymns of Fred Pratt Green," 409.

11 Words: Fred Pratt Green © 1974 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

12 Young, *Companion*, 195.

13 Fred Pratt Green, "Poet and Hymn Writer," *Worship* 49, 4 (April 1975): 190–201.

> opportunities—such glorious opportunities—for them to be sung. The hymn writer exists to enrich the Church's worship, to express the wide range of Christian devotion, to offer salvation, to teach doctrine, and to guide our feet into the way of scriptural holiness.[14]

He felt called, in other words, through his composition of hymns to enhance worship, to reflect the depth and breadth of devotion and doctrine, and to guide the singer in the way of salvation.

"The wise hymn writer," Green instructs, "will look upon theology as giving strength to the structure of hymnody."[15] He was always attentive to the multivalent nature of this theological task. In discussing what he calls the "secret of timeliness" with regard to the hymn, he underscores a theological point, "that these hymns express something vital in Christian faith; that they say it with simplicity and directness; that they say it 'in depth,' so that they can be sung over and over again without losing their freshness or exhausting their meaning."[16] Green viewed his craft as a theological project not unlike that conceived by Charles Wesley. He sensed how the challenges of expressing the theology of the church stretched his own capacity.

Interestingly enough, one of the greatest tests of Green's skill elicited what he recorded as his own favorite creation. In 1971 David McCarthy asked him to write on the rare theme of doubt.[17] The composition begins with his honest reflection:

> When our confidence is shaken
> in beliefs we thought secure;
> when the spirit in its sickness
> seeks but cannot find a cure:
> God is active in the tensions
> Of a faith not yet mature (505:1).[18]

The third stanza explores the paradox of prayer—"In the discipline of praying, / when it's hardest to believe"—and the crucible of

14 Green, "Poet and Hymn Writer," 192–93.
15 Green, "Poet and Hymn Writer," 194.
16 Green, "Poet and Hymn Writer," 196.
17 Braley, "Hymns of Fred Pratt Green," 411.
18 Words: Fred Pratt Green © 1971 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

compassion—"in the drudgery of caring, / when it's not enough to grieve." In the cross of Christ he finds, not so much a resolution as a solidarity: "God is love; and he redeems us / in the Christ we crucify: / this is God's eternal answer / to the world's eternal why." Vernon Wicker claims that "the one dimension of his hymns that rises above all others is his disarming honesty in articulating the gospel."[19]

A Lyrical Theologian of Jubilation

It may be too early to fully assess the hymn corpus of Fred Pratt Green; but I feel confident in describing him as a lyrical theologian in the Methodist tradition, given the scale of his productivity, the widespread use of his hymns, and the range of theological discourse within them. Erik Routley describes Fred Pratt Green as one of the most theological writers of the new English renaissance.[20] Like the great triumvirate of British Methodist preachers of the twentieth century—Leslie D. Weatherhead (1893–1970), W. E. Sangster (1900–1960), and Lord Donald Soper (1903–1998)—Green sought to navigate the great cultural and intellectual challenges of post-war Britain. Like these contemporaries and friends, he entered the common current, as Tom Langford has put it, to encourage "an evangelical vitality, a concern for social justice, a willingness to challenge established structures, a respect for the Scriptures and forms of worship, a desire to read history fully, a catholic spirit of appreciative reception, and a continuing optimism toward God's grace."[21]

Green's father, most certainly, had driven a strong antipathy toward fundamentalism into him, having resigned the office of a local pastor because he could not accept the doctrine of eternal damnation.[22] A spirit of openness and honesty in the quest for truth characterized his son throughout the course of his life. Green provided something approaching a theological self-portrait that reflects this spirit:

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19 Vernon Wicker, "Fred Pratt Green: The Poet and His Hymns," *The Hymn* 46, 4 (October 1995): 13.

20 Erik Routley, "Hymn-Writers of the New English Renaissance," *The Hymn* 28 (January 1977): 6–10.

21 Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 169.

22 Braley, "Introducing Fred Pratt Green," vii.

> My generation may have doubted the Virgin Birth; it never doubted the existence of God. We may have argued the difference between "deity" and "divinity"; we never doubted the absolute authority and lordship of Christ . . . we were never tempted to dismiss the Incarnation as myth. We had reservations about the resurrection of the body; we never doubted in our personal survival after death.[23]

"His absolute belief in God as Creator and God of Eternal Love," Braley affirms wryly, "goes back a long way."[24]

But Braley also observes: "Nothing could destroy his discovery that the Cross is immeasurably more moving, more compelling and closer to the realities of human life than any other religious fact or symbol."[25] Green's hymns, in fact, demonstrate a profound Christocentrism. Emily Andrews avers that he embraced both the transcendent and immanent facets of God "through a Christ-centered, theologically astute approach. God is great; there is an aspect of God's being that is beyond us and our understanding. But in Christ God draws near; Christ gives us understanding and the ability to commune with the Father."[26] Maureen Harris emphasizes the fact that the names of Wesley and Green are often linked together "because both writers display the same powerful emphasis on the life and death of Jesus Christ and its significance. Their hymns stress the humanity of Christ: there is an awareness of both writers on God's self-imposed limitation in the Incarnation, focusing on the paradox of the powerful becoming weak, the intangible becoming the physical, and the Creator becoming the created."[27] For Green, Christ illuminates all things as no other source of light.

Routley observes about Green's hymns that there is "a deceptive naturalness about their diction. . . . In true Gospel-fashion, they hide all the effort and wrestling and self-criticism that went

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23 Fred Pratt Green, "Speaking Personally," in Green, *Hymns and Ballads*," xv.

24 Braley, "Hymns of Fred Pratt Green," 409.

25 Braley, "Hymns of Fred Pratt Green," 409–10.

26 Emily Snider Andrews, "Hymns and Doctrine: God's Transcendence and Immanence," *The Hymn* 64, 1 (Winter 2013): 29.

27 Maureen Harris, "Fred Pratt Green," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/f/fred-pratt-green; accessed October 8, 2018.

into their making."[28] His phrases sometimes understate their theological meaning and significance by virtue of their simplicity and unadorned quality. Harris illustrates this, using one of Green's eucharistic hymns, "Here are the bread and wine." "Homely the bread we eat, / The wine we drink," Green sings, "Christ in the commonplace / of bread and wine." Likewise, he frequently formulates his lyrical theology in what Dick Watson has described as "flashes of imagery."[29] He contrasts darkness with light, winter with spring, dying with life. The simple words, metaphors, and images Green uses enable him, like Wesley, to communicate his theology in plain words for plain people, but eminently appropriate for his time and place.

Given the origin of many of Green's hymns, the subject and thematic matter represent an extremely broad biblical and theological spectrum. As Green himself explains: "Few of my hymns were written, as poems are written, because of a restless urge to create; most were written to meet a stated need, even to fit a particular, and sometimes unrepeated, occasion. One result, I suppose, is range."[30] So these wide-ranging hymns not only reveal Green's own theological perspectives and passions, they also represent well the context in which he preached, prayed, worked, and sang. "Many of Pratt Green's hymns have a scriptural basis," avers Andrews; "some are based on biblical characters, some were commissioned for specific circumstances and groups, and others follow traditional thematic lines such as creation, justice, Trinity, or praise."[31] In his definitive collection of Fred Pratt Green's hymns, Braley found it possible to arrange the 166 texts under five broad headings: God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and the Christian Life.

My analysis discloses a lyrical theology of jubilation in three primary movements: the God revealed in Christ, the incarnational mission of the church, and partnership with God in authentic discipleship. One of Green's most popular and widely used hymns illustrates each theme.

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28 Erik Routley, "Foreword," in Green, *Hymns and Ballads*, v.

29 J. R. Watson, *The English Hymn: A Critical and Historical Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 35.

30 Green, "Speaking Personally," in Green, *Hymns and Ballads*, xvi.

31 Andrews, "Hymns and Doctrine," 29.

The God Revealed in Christ

Of Green's eighteen hymns in the UMH, five fall under the broad heading "The Grace of Jesus Christ." They deal sequentially with the birth, baptism, life and teachings, and passion and death of Jesus, in other words, covering the whole span of his life and ministry. The Second Person of the Trinity does not come "mighty to destroy" but "to bid us love each other" (223:2:3-4). In him "the age of grace began" (252:2:8). As our healer, Christ offers not only a wholeness that enriches the faithful but also a healing that "shall reach the whole of humankind" (265:5:4). The singer laments those who mocked the reign of Jesus, for "They could not know / as we do now" how glorious his crown, how redemptive his mercy, and how expansive his love (285). All these Christological hymns reveal that God is now knowable and approachable because of Christ, but none articulates the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ more fully than "Christ Is the World's Light."

This stellar hymn was actually one of Green's first, composed for *Hymns and Songs* (1969). Originally entitled "The Uniqueness of Christ," Green alludes to several biblical texts in the successive stanzas—John 8:12 (light), Ephesians 2:14 (peace), and John 1:4 (life)—but features John 14:9: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." "All four stanzas," observes Vernon Wicker, "present the dynamic, cosmic, demanding presence of Christ in the world."[32] In this hymn Green depicts Christ as the world's light in whom we see God, the world's peace who unites us in God, and the world's life who redeems us for community in God's kingdom. The One who is our brother uniquely discloses God the Father:

> Christ is the world's light, Christ and no other;
> Born in our darkness, he became our Brother.
> If we have seen him, we have seen the Father:
> Glory to God on high (188:1).[33]

32 Vernon Wicker, "Fred Pratt Green: The Poet and His Hymns," *The Hymn* 46, no. 4 (October 1995): 14.

33 Words: Fred Pratt Green © 1969 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Christ is "the unsurpassable, supreme revelation of God the Father."[34] The final doxological stanza celebrates the God who is personal and near:

> Give God the glory, God and none other;
> Give God the glory, Spirit, Son, and Father;
> Give God the glory, God with us, my brother:
> Glory to God on high (188:4).[35]

Paul Schilling identifies the heart of Green's lyrical theology: "The hymn bears witness that God's love is at the root of every gift, flower, or fruit; that to possess amid evil an indestructible love is joy; and that the Spirit enables us to face the mystery and uncertainty of the future in peace."[36]

The Incarnational Mission of the Church

Green conceives the church essentially as a force for good in the world, describing it as "a Base of Operation in the world as well as an Ark of Safety for the faithful."[37] Three hymns, in particular, call the church to participate in God's mission in the world God loves. Based on the call of the prophet recorded in Isaiah 6:8, "Whom Shall I Send" exhorts us to bend "our thoughts, our skills, our energies, / and life itself to this one end" (582:4:2-3), namely, the *missio dei*. Concerned especially for the victimized poor "across the world" and "across the street," people "who never live before they die" (589:2), Green implores "The Church of Christ, in Every Age" to become "a partner in Christ's sacrifice" (589:3) for it has "no mission but to serve" (589:5:1). "When the Church of Jesus"—the first hymn in *Hymns and Ballads*—pleads for Christian responsibility in and for the world. It acknowledges the church's tendency "to allow the loftiness of worship to prevent the church from

34 Andrews, "Hymns and Doctrine," 29.

35 Words: Fred Pratt Green © 1969 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

36 S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 115.

37 Fred Pratt Green, "Hymn Writing To-Day," *Bulletin of the Hymn Society* 120 (January 1971): 122–24.

seeing the need for ministry to others."[38] "Forge our Christian worship," Green insists, "into Christian deeds" (592:2:4).

All these themes coalesce in Green's most well-known hymn on the church, "God Is Here!" According to Wicker, the text of this hymn "demonstrates perhaps a more compelling sweep than any other."[39] Generally sung to the exuberant and glorious tune Abbot's Leigh, it declares God to be in the midst of those who gather to worship, reminds the community of the grace of Christ found in word and table, celebrates Jesus' model of radical hospitality, and commissions the people of God to practice the gospel in the realization of God's reign.

> Lord of all, of church and kingdom,
> In an age of change and doubt
> Keep us faithful to the gospel;
> Help us work your purpose out.
> Here, in this day's dedication,
> All we have to give, receive;
> We, who cannot live without you,
> We adore you! We believe (660:4)![40]

Authentic Discipleship as Active Love

Although Green writes less about the Holy Spirit than he does about Christ, he never questions the formative influence of the Spirit in the shaping of Jesus' disciples. If the Spirit initiates the activity of God in our lives, then she most certainly consummates that witness in the assurance that we are all God's beloved children. Two hymns in particular celebrate this partnership with God in authentic discipleship. Green wrote "Of All the Spirit's Gifts to Me" for a United Women's Rally held in London in May 1975. Participants first sang this hymn during a session on "The Fruits of the Spirit," the theme addressed by the Metropolitan Anthony Bloom.[41] In this hymn Green provides a lyrical paraphrase of Galatians 5:22, focusing on the first three treasures in St. Paul's list of spiritual fruit. The "clearest purpose" of all authentic

38 Harry Eskew and Hugh T. McElrath, *Sing with Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Hymnology* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1980), 260.

39 Wicker, "Green," 15.

40 Words: Fred Pratt Green © 1979 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

41 Young, *Companion*, 539.

discipleship, he claims, is "to share love, joy, and peace" (336:5:3-4). He composed "Rejoice in God's Saints" for a communion service in Norwich Cathedral. He paints a lyrical portrait of those faithful followers of Jesus who remain unpraised and unknown yet carry someone's cross or their own. Echoing the famous statement of John Wesley, he sings: "Our world is their parish; their purpose is God" (708:2:4). The true disciples of Christ have discovered how to give of themselves as they bear witness to the gospel in all the varying circumstances of life.

Green strikes the same note of social justice in "For the Fruits of This Creation." Carlton Young offers commentary on this "Harvest Hymn" of 1970. "The poet skillfully employs the motif of thanksgiving for God's bounteous gifts," he observes, "as the continuum for an eloquent social gospel hymn, advocating adequate compensation to the laborer and chiding the Western world and its church as ungrateful for God's gifts of food and unable and unwilling to share these gifts with the rest of God's family."[42] True disciples of Christ, in Green's view, share everything out of love; they view every person as a beloved sibling in the family of God.

"We are saved through the love of God in Christ," Fred Pratt Green once told Whitney Dough, "and I do strongly believe that the only force in the world that has any strength to change the world, or change us, is that very quality of love."[43] Such confident belief elicits jubilation. The lyrical theology of Green's hymns promotes jubilation through adoration of the God revealed in Christ, engagement in God's mission of love, and authentic discipleship in the world. Jubilation erupts in a thankful and attentive, gracious and hopeful community. In his most widely circulated and beloved hymn—his signature text, "**When in Our Music God Is Glorified**," based on Psalm 150 and Mark 14:26—Green invites the community of faith to join in a united act of praise and jubilation.

1. When, in our music, God is glorified,
   and adoration leaves no room for pride,
   it is as though the whole creation cried:
   Alleluia!

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42 Young, *Companion*, 344.

43 Whitney J. Dough, *The Hymnwriters Our Unknown Friends: A Biographical Guide to British and American Sacred Song* (Franklin, TN: Providence House, 1995), 121.

2. How often, making music, we have found
   a new dimension in the world of sound,
   as worship moved us to a more profound
   Alleluia!

3. So has the Church, in liturgy and song,
   in faith and love, through centuries of wrong,
   borne witness to the truth in every tongue:
   Alleluia!

4. And did not Jesus sing a Psalm that night
   when utmost evil strove against the Light?
   Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:
   Alleluia!

5. Let every instrument be tuned for praise!
   Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
   And may God give us faith to sing always:
   Alleluia! Amen![44]

44 Words: Fred Pratt Green © 1972 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

8

Fresh Expressions

British and American Lyrical Theology Today

Entrepreneurs in the church today sometimes use the term "Fresh Expressions" to describe new ways of interfacing the church and the culture. Old wineskins don't always suffice in the effort to proclaim the gospel in this "brave new world." Language changes as well, and Methodist hymn writers in the English-speaking world have risen to the challenge of fresh words for fresh times. Bernard Braley, long-time friend and editor of Fred Pratt Green, encouraged Andrew Pratt, as a novice lyricist, to untether his language from the hymns of the past. Pratt testifies that his words set him free and enabled him to find his own unique, contemporary voice. In an examination of "Classic Contemporary Protestant Hymnody," Emily Brink reflects on this very issue but also reveals some larger concerns:

> With many changes in the English language during this period, reflected in many new Bible translations, hymn writers also began using fresh language and took on topics seldom addressed in traditional hymnody. They turned once again to lament, confession, prophetic proclamation, and intercession—needed counterparts to the predominant themes of praise and thanksgiving in classic Protestant hymnody and worship. Perhaps two words best exemplify

> the approach of hymn writers in the last half of the twentieth century: inclusivity and justice.[1]

In an overview of the changes taking place from the middle of the twentieth century in the English-speaking world, Brink identifies four broad movements that signal new beginnings for the song, and therefore the lyrical theology of the church: hymnody is becoming deeper, broader, more active, and more diverse.[2]

Richard Blanchard (1927–) attempted to give voice to these kinds of concerns, albeit in the gospel song genre. One of the last American Methodist lyricists to use this form, Blanchard was particularly concerned with bringing the scriptural witness to life in his texts. Although he has composed dozens of gospel songs, he is remembered for his singular signature song, "**Fill My Cup, Lord**."

Born in China of Methodist missionary parents, Blanchard later attended Candler School of Theology and became a member of the Florida Conference from which he retired in 1988. "Fill My Cup, Lord" came to him under unique circumstances as he awaited the arrival of a couple for premarital counseling one afternoon in the late 1950s. "Quite often I play around with a song idea in my mind," he later reminisced. "All of a sudden it will gel. . . . It took only six minutes to think up the words of 'Fill my Cup, Lord.' I was finished with the music in another 20 minutes."[3] Based on the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:5-42), this song points theologically to the deep spiritual thirst of God's children and the way in which God offers grace, mercy, and love to fill their souls. Only the chorus of his three-stanza hymn appears in the UMH (641):

> Fill my cup, Lord,
> I lift it up, Lord.
> Come and quench this thirsting of my soul.

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1 Emily R. Brink, "When in Our Music God Is Glorified: Classic Contemporary Protestant Hymnody," in C. Michael Hawn, ed., *New Songs of Celebration Render: Congregational Song in the Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: GIA Pub., 2013), 68.

2 Brink, "Contemporary Protestant Hymnody," 41–49.

3 Citing an interview for the *Miami Herald*, Jim Garvey, "History of Hymns: 'Fill My Cup, Lord,'" Discipleship Ministries: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-fill-my-cup-lord; accessed April 17, 2019.

Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more;
Fill my cup, fill it up
And make me whole.

Those contemporary Methodists producing classical hymns with fresh expressions include an English professor from New Zealand and two British pastors; a group of American Methodists connected with Jane Marshall; and two hymn writers who particularly address the concern of social justice.

Australasian and British Lyricists

Colin Alexander Gibson (1933–) is the only hymn writer from New Zealand featured in this study.[4] Educated in classics and music, with a doctorate in English literature, Gibson brings a full array of skills to the task of hymn composition. Alongside his forty-two-year educational ministry as Donald Collie Professor of English at the University of Otago, he also served as organist and choirmaster at Mornington Methodist Church in Dunedin. Inspired by a visit of a group from the ecumenical monastic community in Taizé, France, Gibson began writing lyrical paraphrases of the Psalms set to folk and classical melodies. This practice propelled him to compose his own lyrical texts and musical settings. He has published four collections of these original hymns: *Singing Love* (1988); *Reading the Signature* (1994); *Songs for a Rainbow People* (1998); and his most celebrated solo collection, *Hope Is Our Song* (2009). His hymns appear in more than forty Australasian and international hymnals.

With regard to his lyrical theology, Gibson describes his hymns as "typically Christ-centred." But he identifies other salient theological themes integral to his work as well, namely, "peace, social justice, concern for the natural environment, inclusiveness, respect for others, as well as human alienation, loneliness and loss." His texts "challenge pious complacency and urge the singers to social action." But his hymns are also filled with fun. "Jumping Jesus," for instance, is a hymn included in his most recent collection. His best-known

4 On his life and work, see Colin Gibson with Richard Watson, "Colin Gibson," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/c/colin-gibson; accessed October 16. 2018. All following quotations come from this source.

hymn and signature text, "**He Came Singing Love**," included in the hymn collection *Worship & Rejoice* (2008), explores Christological themes and their implications for Christian discipleship. The opening stanza sets the repeated pattern for each successive verse:

> He came singing love
> And lived singing love;
> He died, singing love.
> He arose in silence.
> For the love to go on
> We must make it our song;
> You and I be the singers (454:1).[5]

In each of the four stanzas, the initial phrase "He came singing . . ." leads to the disciples' response, "We must make it our song; / You and I be the singers." And thus all Jesus' followers are called to embrace love (in the first stanza), faith (in the second), hope (in the third), and peace (in the fourth)—the primary songs of Jesus—as their songs as well.

Brian Richard Hoare (1935–), ordained to the ministry in 1971, has provided leadership in British Methodism on multiple levels, including service as president of Conference during 1995–96.[6] Fifteen of his hymns appear in *Come Celebrate* (2009), edited by the Anglican Michael Saward. This compilation of songs features the work of twenty leading hymn writers in the United Kingdom. Each contributor has had at least twenty published songs, but this collection presents a selection of favorite texts not yet made available widely. Four of Hoare's hymns appear in the more recent *Ancient and Modern: Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship* collection (2013), including "All Together in One Place" (234) and "Lord, You Are the Light of Life to Me" (720). Many of his hymns explore various aspects of Jesus' life, ministry, and mission.

Hoare's best-known and signature hymn, "**Born in Song**," appears in *Singing the Faith* (2011) and provides a systematic synopsis of his lyrical theology. His text explores the various dimensions

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5 Words: Colin Gibson © 1994 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

6 See Christopher Idle, "Brian Richard Hoare," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/b/brian-richard-hoare; accessed October 15, 2018.

of the kenotic hymn of Philippians 2:5-11. The opening stanza celebrates the fact that "God's people have always been singing"; the community sings to praise God for all that God has done. We also praise God because "We his image bear" (2:4). Stanza three—the pivot verse—articulates primary Christological themes, including Jesus' self-emptying, lordship, solidarity with humanity, redemptive work, resurrection, and exaltation:

> Christ is King!
> He left all the glory of heaven.
> Christ is King!
> Born to share in our pain;
> crucified, for sinners atoning,
> risen, exalted, soon to come again.[7]

In the fourth stanza Hoare turns to the work of the Holy Spirit who "has made us anew" (4:4). Stanza five exhorts the community to "tell the world" so that every tongue might "confess and sing his praise" (5:6). Finally, Hoare celebrates the glorious reign of Christ in glory. The repeated first and third lines of each stanza provide the outline of his theology: "born in song" (1, creation); "praise to God" (2, Creator); "Christ is King" (3, Son); "sing the song" (4, Holy Spirit); "tell the world" (5, church and mission); and "then the end" (6, eschatology or consummation).

Andrew Pratt (1948–) stands in the line of succession that extends from Charles Wesley through Fred Pratt Green.[8] Indeed, no contemporary British Methodist rivals him in terms of the scope and range of his creative work. Originally trained as a marine biologist, Andrew Pratt studied for the Methodist ministry at Queen's College and after years of service in circuit ministry completed a doctoral dissertation on the 1933 *Methodist Hymn Book*. He has published well over a thousand hymns in collections such as *Blinded by the Dazzle* (1997), *Whatever Name or Creed* (2002), and *Reclaiming Praise* (2006). He has multiple publications in other arenas, such as worship and peace studies, including *Story Song* (1993), *Big Blue Planet* (1995), and

7 Words & Music: Brian Hoare © 1983 The Jubilate Group (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

8 Personal communication with the author, April 3, 2019. Quotations that follow come from this exchange unless otherwise identified.

Sound Bytes (1999). His collaboration with a British lay Methodist, Marjorie Dobson, led to the publication of two lyrical and liturgical projects, *Poppies and Snowdrops* (2006), a resource for people in times of grief and bereavement, and *Nothing Too Religious* (2008). Fifteen of his hymns are included in *Come Celebrate* (2009). The current Methodist hymnal, *Singing the Faith* (2011), contains eight of his hymns, which span a wide range of theological topics and concerns.

Pratt's initial motivation to write hymns was to understand theology better. His recently published collection of 144 new hymns, *More than Words* (2015), reflects this primary concern. "I have tried to be true to my own integrity and a dynamic yet consistent Christian faith," he claims. "I hold in tension orthodox Christian belief and incarnational theology, while I seek to be open to the development of faith in the light of new understandings and insights, and as I swing between head and heart."[9] He seeks to interface scripture, theology, and life's challenges, as illustrated by a hymn for those infected with HIV/AIDS, first published in the second volume of *Hymns & Congregation Songs* in 1991. The hymn begins:

> When life's crippled, flawed or faulted,
> Filled with fear, with folly strewn (3:1:1-2).

Pratt confesses that this is the space in which God actually resides, and God can never be thwarted. God perennially loves in the darkness of sorrow's womb. "My writing continues to explore scripture," he writes, "but tries to relate it to today."

Pratt reflects regularly on difficult theological issues that revolve around suffering, natural disasters, and human problems as well. His work bears witness to a theology in which inclusiveness, compassion, and justice play a central role. He creates texts that are "literally realistic and theologically defensible."[10] No theological issue elicits this more fully than human suffering, and Pratt's efforts to produce a "sung theodicy" are immediately apparent. He makes the claim quite openly that he is still attempting to make sense of both theology and experience in this regard. In a signature hymn he composed in response to the August 2007 earthquake in Peru, "**If God**

9 Andrew Pratt, *More than Words: Words for a Lyrical Faith* (London: Stainer & Bell, 2015), ix.

10 Andrew Pratt, "Hymns and the Nature of Evil: Toward a Sung Theodicy: A Hymnwriter's Musings," *The Hymn* 64, 2 (Spring 2013): 10.

Created All We See," he struggles with these issues and invites the singer to wrestle with him.[11]

> If God created all we see
> then ours is still a timeless cry;
> we cannot understand God's sense;
> we ask again the reason why (1).

He locates God, in fact, right in the center of human suffering and misery.

> Yet God is in this quaking mess,
> is in the people crying out
> in pain and terminal distress (3:2-4).

In the cross Pratt discerns the way in which God shoulders the pain of human suffering and brokenness through solidarity. "Was this prefigured by a cross," he ponders, "this site of human agony; / the tumbled timbers, broken walls" (2:1-3). "God seeks the dying," he claims, "nail pierced hands / reach deep within this grief and loss" (4:1-2). Indeed, as we enter into this mystery and seek to emulate the loving response of God to tragedy and loss,

> Our every word or touch of love
> speaks of the gift of grace and cross (4:3-4).

Pratt's hymns, like this one, challenge the community of faith to embody light and salt, mercy and hope. "If God is in the turmoil and if God has no hands but human hands in this generation," he admonishes, "then God reaches with those hands into the heart of suffering and, enigmatically, is there in the people who are sought."[12] He discerns God's love in the crucible of these challenges and struggles and invites God's children into this journey leading onward and upward. The opening words of a well-known hymn from *Singing the Faith* (716) illustrate this salient theme in Pratt's lyrical theology, made all the more compelling in the light of suffering: "There are no strangers to God's love." In his view, the scriptural narrative reveals

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11 Words: Andrew Pratt © 2007 Stainer & Bell, Ltd. (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

12 Pratt, "Hymns and the Nature of Evil," 11.

one stellar reality in the universe: "I hold to the eternity of Love for nothing in all creation can separate us from that Love."

The "Jane Marshall Circle"

Jane Marshall (1924–) received the coveted Roger N. Deschner Award for "outstanding contributions to the music and worship life of the church" in 1997. She published a number of her hymns (having composed both texts and tunes) in *Grace, Noted* (1992), but she is also known for her anthems and choral productions. Her first choral anthem, "My Eternal King," debuted at Highland Park United Methodist Church in Dallas in 1952; and since 1954 more than two hundred of her anthems, hymns, arrangements, and poems have appeared in print. "Marshall is in a very select group of successful composers/lyricists," maintains Carlton Young, "a dual-talent exemplified in her early works."[13] She served on the task force that prepared the United Methodist *Supplement to the Book of Hymns* (1982). Some of her texts and tunes are co-published with John Thornburg in *Can God Be Seen in Other Ways?* (2003) and *What Gift Can We Bring?* (2003).

This latter volume draws its title from her most widely used hymn, "**What Gift Can We Bring?**"—the only one of her hymns to appear in the UMH (87). Composed in 1980 for the twenty-fifth anniversary of Northaven United Methodist Church in Dallas, this hymn strikes Marshall's signature keynote of gratitude. Her theology revolves around this uplifting theme, cultivated in the hearts of faithful people, perhaps principally through their singing.

1. What gift can we bring, what present, what token?
   What words can convey it, the joy of this day?
   When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,
   What song can we offer in honor and praise?[14]

The second and third stanzas express thanks to God for the past, present, and future, all of which lead the people of God to erupt

13 Carlton Young, "Jane Manton Marshall," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/j/jane-manton-marshall; accessed October 15, 2018.

14 Words: Jane Marshall © 1982 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

into joyful praise. Marshall turns the interrogative of stanza one into the exultant declaration of the closing stanza, celebrating "This gift we *now* bring," "This song we *now* offer" through words that *can* convey "the joy of this day!" Commenting on their relationship, John Thornburg notes, "Jane's combination of keen musicality, theological depth and humor made her a wonderful companion in creativity. The sixteen hymns in our collection, *Can God Be Seen in Other Ways*, were all written in a period of six weeks, and they were among the most meaningful six weeks of my life."[15]

Natalie Allyn Sleeth (1930–1992) was a gifted musician, choral composer, and arranger.[16] After her marriage to Ronald Sleeth, a preaching professor at Perkins School of Theology in Dallas, she continued her studies in music theory with Jane Marshall. Like her mentor, Sleeth generally composed the music for her own lyrics, with over two hundred published works ranging from simple songs for children to major choral compositions. In 1969 she published her very first of many anthems, "Canon of Praise," which almost immediately became the best-selling publication of the Choristers Guild. In a devotional work entitled *Adventures for the Soul* (1987), she describes some of her most significant compositions, including her canon "Go now in peace" and her best-known creation, "Hymn of Promise," both of which are included in the UMH (665 and 707). According to Sleeth, a T. S. Eliot line—"in our end is our beginning"—provided the germ of inspiration for this hymn with its hope-filled opening line, "In the bulb there is a flower." She wrote this signature text at a time when she was "pondering the ideas of life, death, spring and winter, Good Friday and Easter, and the whole reawakening of the world that happens every spring."[17]

Not long after Sleeth composed her "**Hymn of Promise,**" her husband, having been diagnosed with cancer, requested that it be sung at his funeral. The hymn begins:

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15 Cited in C. Michael Hawn, "History of Hymns: 'What Gift Can We Bring,'" Discipleship Ministries: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-what-gift-can-we-bring; accessed April 17, 2019.

16 See Carlton Young, "Natalie Sleeth," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/n/natalie-sleeth; accessed October 15, 2018.

17 Natalie Sleeth, *Adventures for the Soul: 35 Inspirational Hymns and the Stories Behind Them* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Co., 1987), 36.

In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free![18]

It concludes with this magnificent anticipation of new life and hope:

In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

Concerning this hymn, Michael Hawn observes:

> A wonderful child-like simplicity permeates "Hymn of Promise." Natalie Sleeth had a gift for composing texts on complex theological ideas that were still accessible to children. Her melodies seemed totally natural and therefore effortless for people to learn. "Hymn of Promise" is one of the most memorable hymns written by an American United Methodist in the last part of the twentieth century.[19]

The plain words of this text for plain people—fitting for a composer in the Methodist tradition—demonstrate the centrality of resurrection in Sleeth's lyrical theology.

John Thornburg (1954–) cannot be described apart from his connection with Jane Marshall either. Following his study of the classics and music at United Methodist DePauw University in Indiana, he completed his theological education at Perkins School of Theology, was ordained, and served pastoral appointments in Texas. In 1979 Thornburg began writing hymns in response to the needs of his congregation, but his creativity blossomed with an appointment

18 Words & Music: Natalie Sleeth © 1986 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

19 C. Michael Hawn, "History of Hymns: 'In the Bulb There Is a Flower,'" Discipleship Ministries: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-in-the-bulb-there-is-a-flower; accessed April 17, 2019.

to Northaven where he met Marshall. Together they published four hymn collections in quick succession: *Can God Be Seen in Other Ways?* (2003); *The One Who Taught Beside the Sea* (2003); *What Gift Can We Bring?* (2003); and *Family of God* (2008). In the end Thornburg and Marshall collaborated on more than 150 lyrical works. Thornburg once quipped: "I am a fourth-generation Methodist minister who was born into a family of folks who couldn't decide whether they were singers or preachers, so I decided to be both."[20] Immersed in the world of North American hymnody, he served as the executive of The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada and as its president (2010–2012). Following twenty-two years in pastoral ministry in Dallas, Thornburg established "A Ministry of Congregational Singing" that carried him around the world. His international interests pulled him into a team effort that produced the first indigenous Cameroonian Methodist hymnal, *Mille Voix Pour te Chanter tes Louanges*, published in 2010.

Carlton Young describes the contours of his lyrical theology: "Thornburg's paraphrases of biblical texts often ask about the 'back story' or explore the inner thoughts of biblical characters, and he is especially eager for the singer of his texts to feel kinship with biblical characters who have dealt with the same realities. He explores the hurts people feel when the church is unable or unwilling to model justice and peace."[21] Thornburg identified "the empowering grace of the Triune God" as the primary theme of his lyrical theology. "God is the hope-producing, despair-crushing One," he confesses. "God is the one who makes things possible, and also calls us back from our tendency to stray." He received inspiration for his most famous hymn, "**God the Sculptor of the Mountains**"—first published in *Wonder, Love and Praise* (1997), a supplement to the Episcopal *Hymnal* (1982)—from a trip to the Alaskan wild. Commissioned in 1994 to honor James Kirby, retiring dean of Perkins School of Theology, this signature hymn is included in *The Faith We Sing* (2060).

Few are as gifted as Thornburg in the powerful use of images. He masterfully juxtaposes the obvious and the unexpected. God is "sculptor of the mountain" but also "miller of the sand." The One

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20 Personal communication with the author, June 19, 2018. Quotations that follow come from this exchange unless otherwise identified.

21 Carlton Young, "John Thornburg," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/j/john-thornburg; accessed October 15, 2018.

who is "jeweler of the heavens" is also "nuisance of the Pharaoh." Thornburg relishes the fact that this latter phrase has been more frequently quoted than any other from the hymn. The concluding couplet of each stanza presents poignant statements about the relation of God to God's children: God is womb, gate, host, present . . . we are formless, sightless, hungry, searching. Powerful verbs celebrate a God who shapes us, leads us, feeds us, and meets us now. The final stanza brings Thornburg's Christology into focus:

> God the unexpected infant,
> God the calm, determined youth,
> God the table turning prophet,
> God the resurrected Truth:
> you are present every moment,
> we are searching, meet us now (2060:4).[22]

No discussion of Thornburg's work would be complete without some reference to the emphasis in his hymns on inclusion and justice. Most recently he has devoted energy to the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ disciples of Jesus in the community of faith. "Though I don't think I was actively homophobic," he writes, "there were real pockets of judgmentalism within me when I was sent to Northaven (a parish where 30 percent of the membership was gay)." He was invited to attend a fundraising event for the Human Rights Campaign at which the Turtle Creek Chorale sang, composed primarily of gay men. Thornburg recalls that as they "started to sing one of their anthems (the point of which was that they weren't asking for anything but to be recognized as people), I started to cry." The moving hymn "**A Lonely Tear**" flowed from his pen.

> A lonely tear:
> a signal from a place so deep
> that when I wipe it from my face
> the moisture feels like grace.
>
> The tear is this:
> I trusted the accepted myth
> that you were sick and I was whole;
> and then I heard your voice.

22 Words: John Thornburg © 1993. Used by permission.

Your words were brave:
though I was frightened and unnerved,
you gently spoke, "I know of fear,
but what I want is friend."

And so I cry:
I feel the shame. I bought the lie.
But still you spoke the gentle word,
"My friend." And I am healed.

My arid pride,
my sense of dread for all things new,
is washed away by joyful tears,
The moisture feels like grace.[23]

The Central Theme of Social Justice

Jim Strathdee (1941–) and his wife, Jean, directors of music for many years at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Sacramento, are active performing artists who have composed more than four hundred songs, hymns, and anthems that combine many styles from the classic hymn to the folk song. They describe their compositions as "a musical offering of hope and encouragement for all people, bringing a message of compassion, justice and healing."[24] In 1969, in response to a poem by Howard Thurman, Strathdee composed "**I Am the Light of the World**," his most well-known work.[25] Set in the style of the gospel song, the chorus of this signature text reminds the singer to come and follow Jesus, to learn to "do and be." Successive stanzas proclaim the prophetic call to justice and mercy: "To find the lost and lonely one, / To heal that broken soul with love, / To feed the hungry children with warmth and good food" (2:1-3); and "To free the prisoner from his chains, / To make the powerful care" (3:1-2). This song reveals a lyrical theology of justice in which the follower of Christ is called to imitate the rabbi who proclaimed his mission in Nazareth.

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23 Words: John Thornburg © 2003 Wayne Leupold Editions, Inc. Used by permission.

24 Cited in "Jim Strathdee," *Hymnary*: https://hymnary.org/person/Strathdee_Jim; accessed April 19, 2019.

25 Words: Jim Strathdee © 1969 Desert Flower Music. Used by permission.

Constance Cherry (1953–) has served as professor of worship and practical ministry at Indiana Wesleyan University since 2004. Two mentors under whom she studied shaped profoundly both her vision of Christian worship and her passion for hymn writing: Robert Webber formed her love of things ancient-future, and Hugh McElrath first challenged her to compose hymns and then encouraged her never to stop. In his foreword to Cherry's collection of twenty-five hymns entitled *Proclaim New Hope* (2001), McElrath describes the nature of her contribution: "Reflecting the broad palette of her experience in theological and worship studies, pastoral service, missions and teaching, Dr. Cherry writes hymns encompassing many subjects, virtually all of which are biblically-based."[26] Despite its small size, this collection demonstrates the breadth of Cherry's lyrical theology. In it she tackles the issues of God's nature ("Transcendent God, Beyond Our Finite World"); the church at worship ("We Are Christ's Body"); trust in Christ ("Where Is the Path that Once Was in Sight"); Christian piety ("Prayer Takes Place on Bended Knee"); intimacy with Christ ("O Unseen Presence by My Side"); and social justice ("In the Faces of the Needy"), as well as celebrating the important sign-acts of the sacraments, marriage, and ordination.

Cherry identifies some of the salient qualities of her hymns:

> There are two themes that have emerged in my hymn writing over time: 1) the person and work of Jesus Christ, and 2) issues of social concern. The Christo-centric theme has evolved over time as a result of my own devotional life but also as a result of my study of Christian liturgy. Christ has been the heart of the liturgy from Pentecost forward. The more I study the worship life of Christianity, the greater my emphasis upon Jesus as the center of it becomes. The social concern themes arise out of my growth in understanding of Methodist piety. These two themes are intricately related, of course, especially in Methodism. As hymnic themes, both of these have been more organic than intentional in that I try to

26 Hugh T. McElrath, "Foreword," in Constance M. Cherry, *Proclaim New Hope* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Co., 2001), np.

> write out of the growth edges in my own spiritual life that speak to the greater church.[27]

Her most widely used signature hymn, "**When Will People Cease Their Fighting**," combines these two theological concerns in compelling fashion:

> When will people cease their fighting?
> When will armies wage no war,
> nations conquer not their neighbor,
> weapons idle, used no more?
> When will guns and bombs be silent?
> When will captives be set free?
> All creation groans in longing
> for the world's true liberty (PNH 19:1).[28]

The hymn concludes with a scriptural affirmation of God's vision of shalom: "for we know that deeper, richer / peace is ours when Christ shall reign; / then will all our swords be plowshares / and God's children free from pain."

Dan Damon (1955–) exemplifies contemporary hymn writers who have turned their attention to the multiple areas of injustice in the world and the Christian mandate to wage peace, embody compassion, and partner with God in the realization of justice.[29] Trained in the arenas of both musicianship and theology, he grounds his creative energy in the pastoral ministry in which he engages as a United Methodist pastor in San Francisco. A multitalented artist and educator, in addition to his pastoral responsibilities Damon frequently provides jazz and improvisational piano concerts, teaches church music at the Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley), and leads workshops on varied topics such as creative hymn writing and global song. All his various hymn collections, from the earliest, *A Place of Prayer* (1989), to his most recent solo collection, *My Child Is a Flower* (2017), strike the keynote of justice. "I

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27 Personal communication with the author, August 15, 2018. Quotations that follow come from this exchange unless otherwise identified.

28 Words: Constance Cherry © 1990 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

29 See Carlton Young, "Daniel C. Damon," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/d/daniel-c-damon; accessed October 15, 2018.

hope you will find songs to sing in this collection," Damon writes, "that will move all people toward the prophet's vision of a just and peaceful world.[30]

In 2010 Damon and his spouse, Eileen Johnson, undertook a thoroughgoing examination of twenty North American hymnals, categorizing 1,957 hymns with regard to themes of justice in the context of current social issues.[31] In an interview with Nancy Hall related to this study and his own hymns, Damon reveals the motivation for this particular aspect of his lyrical theology:

> I think that as we sing our cries for justice concerns in church we allow people to hear those cries who would not otherwise pay attention. As we embody these issues it touches us in a very personal way and it also touches the whole gathered community. This begins the process of caring for people in a new way. It's a very powerful experience that happens when we sing together about justice.[32]

Speaking about his use of contemporary language, Damon says that "when we sing from the more traditional body of hymnody the words no longer connect with [people] in the same way."[33] Not only his words, but the issues of compassion and justice he addresses in his hymns strike an immediate cord because of their connection with real life. The tragic death of a child elicits "We Are Your Children"; reflection on the immigration crisis provides an impetus for "When Jesus Was a Refugee"; engagement with the homeless prompts "Beside the Great Cathedrals"; and, most recently, pastoral concern related to a child with Down syndrome led to "My Child Is a Flower."

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30 Cited in promotional materials on the Hope Publishing Company website: https://www.hopepublishing.com/W4139-MY_CHILD_IS_A_FLOWER/; accessed April 18, 2019.

31 For the preliminary findings of this study, consult Dan C. Damon with Eileen M. Johnson, "A Cry for Justice in Hymnody: A Plenary Address to The Hymn Society in the United States and Canada," *The Hymn* 61, 4 (Autumn 2010): 8–16.

32 Nancy E. Hall, "Singing Our Way to Justice: A Conversation with Dan Damon—hymn writer, composer, and pastor," *Review and Expositor* 114, 3 (2017): 413.

33 Hall, "Singing Our Way to Justice," 413.

Damon, in fact, demonstrates a particular concern for justice related to children. His participation in a reading session for children's anthems in which children were described as weak elicited this response:[34]

> Strong, gentle children,
> God made you beautiful,
> gave you the wisdom and power you need;
> speak in the silence
> all you are longing for;
> live out your calling to love and to lead.[35]

A challenging trip to Zimbabwe and the cries of children for a drink of water inspired a refrain:

> To the thirsty world,
> to the hungry children looking out,
> reaching up,
> Jesus comes to bless
> and to give himself in this bread,
> in this cup.[36]

Damon insists that his passion for justice emerges from the strong Christological focus of his lyrical theology. "I'm very orthodox as far as Jesus being fully human and fully divine is concerned," he maintains, "one of the central paradoxes of the faith. I embrace both aspects; not because I understand them intellectually, but because I feel they're necessary for our faith story."[37] In his very first hymn, "Eternal Christ, You Rule," Damon signaled the integral nature of the person of Christ and his reign:

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34 See Damon with Johnson, "A Cry for Justice in Hymnody," 9.

35 Dan Damon, *Faith Will Sing* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Co., 1993), 21. Words: Daniel Charles Damon © 1993 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

36 Dan Damon, *To the Thirsty World: New Hymns for a New Day* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002), 16. Words: Dan Damon © 1993 Abingdon Press (Admin. by Music Services ASCAP). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

37 Cited in Hall, "Singing Our Way to Justice," 409.

> Eternal Christ, you rule keeping company with pain;
> with love and truth as tools,
> come build in us your reign.[38]

In his signature text, "**Like a Child**"—included in *The Faith We Sing* (2092)—Damon binds together Christ and God's in-breaking reign:

> Like a child born to pray
> and to show us the way,
> like a child here to stay,
> Jesus comes.
> Like a child we receive
> all that love can conceive,
> like a child we believe,
> Jesus comes.[39]

38 Dan Damon, *Garden of Joy* (Carol Stream, IL: Hope Publishing Co., 2019), 6. Words: Daniel Charles Damon © 1991 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

39 Words: Daniel Charles Damon © 1993 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

9

Himnos Nuevos

PIONEERS OF CONTEXTUALIZED LYRICAL THEOLOGY

In addition to those producing hymnody from the original centers of Methodism in Britain and North America, a worldwide chorus of voices gives renewed expression to Methodist lyrical theology today. These final two chapters explore these developments, first examining the work of Methodist pioneers who sought to contextualize sacred song and then reviewing contemporary contributors to the lyrical theology of a global Methodist community.

In 1739 John Wesley proclaimed prophetically that he looked upon all the world as his parish. He could never have imagined in his own day just how far his movement of renewal would extend. If early twentieth-century lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition was represented essentially by three primary colors, to use that image (classical hymns, gospel/holiness songs, and black gospel music), in this new era it has burst into a kaleidoscopic array of colors and shapes. Three colors no longer suffice; they are too limited to describe the diversity of contemporary contexts, cultures, and languages. "While the heart of the gospel message has been sustained through the witness of song, the singers and the forms of the songs have changed over the last century and a half," writes S T Kimbrough Jr. in his introduction to *Global Praise I*. "When we sing

the songs of one another, we strengthen the bonds of love, unity, and peace, and . . . we affirm our mutual faith."[1]

General theological trends in Methodism in the late twentieth century parallel this diversification in lyrical theology. Tom Langford reflects on these developments in *Practical Divinity* in a chapter devoted to indigenous theologies.

> The possibility of diversity within unity was expressed by John Wesley himself, for the founding father understood Christian community to be built upon integrity-with-difference. He did not insist upon conformity in forms of worship or in church polity. Catholicity, Wesley said, is a gracious quality of Christian life, which recognizes that although Christian expression may vary, "there is a peculiar love we owe to those who love God." With an open and enthusiastic spirit, he welcomed into common company all those who shared the Christian faith, and he endorsed participation in the widest range of Christian traditions and openness to ecumenical life. This spirit of unity in diversity has remained a dominant characteristic of the expanding Wesleyan movement.[2]

The fact that indigenous lyrical theologies reflect this spirit and embrace the expansive nature of creativity within Methodism today may be testimony to the enduring witness of this gracious spirit of openness and acceptance—the wide embrace.

In 2013 Michael Hawn, a contemporary United Methodist hymnologist and ethnomusicologist, compiled and edited *New Songs of Celebration Render* in an effort to provide insight into the explosion of congregational song, not only within Methodism, but across the spectrum of Christian traditions. One of the most significant studies of this kind to date, the wealth of information he and his contributors provide, in addition to their analysis of trends, makes this resource invaluable. Hawn attempts to bring order out of the complexity of

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1 S T Kimbrough Jr., ed., *Global Praise I*, revised edition (New York: GBG-Musik, 1997), np.

2 Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 239–40.

global Christianity by identifying seven different streams of song.[3] Three of these streams touch most directly upon the Methodist lyrical theology we have already encountered: contemporary Protestant hymnody, African American congregational song, and gospel and revival songs. The contribution of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean—a development in which Methodists have figured prominently—represents a new ecumenical and global stream that we must now take into account.

Akin to the effects of the information explosion, this new diversity may be overwhelming to some. But as Methodists around the globe have begun to "find their own voices" in the sacred songs they compose and sing, and as these songs cross cultural boundaries into new frontiers, they help enrich the theological understanding of the whole family. The dynamic nature of all these changes and Hawn's examination of the various streams of song led him to an important conclusion. "Although it is true that some theological themes emerge across streams," he maintains, "specific differences appear from stream to stream; some theological themes are more prominent in some streams than in others."[4] The theological concerns elevated to prominence in indigenous Methodist lyrical theologies—a tributary of this newer global and ecumenical stream—include freedom, justice, and mission.[5]

Early Indigenous Voices

Seven Methodist composers of indigenous sacred song—from Mexico, China, Japan, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, and Argentina—pioneered in the creation of new hymns that addressed the theological concerns of their contexts.

Vicente Mendoza (1875–1955) was a Latin American pioneer in every sense of the word.[6] The same year as his birth the Methodist Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church South

3 C. Michael Hawn, ed., *New Songs of Celebration Render: Congregational Song in the Twenty-First Century* (Chicago: GIA Pub., 2013), xxix–xxxiii.

4 Hawn, *New Songs*, xliii.

5 See Hawn's "Overview of Congregational Song Since Vatican II," *New Songs*, 356.

6 "Vicente Mendoza," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/v/vicente-mendoza; accessed April 19, 2019.

published the first Spanish-language hymnal, *Himnos para el uso de la Iglesia Metodista, del Sur, en Mexico*, essentially a modest collection of classic hymns translated into Spanish. Mendoza was a first-generation Mexican Methodist, a founder of Hispanic Methodism in the United States, and the most highly acclaimed evangelist of his generation. The most famous of his fifty hymns, "**Jesus es mi Rey soberano" [O Jesus, My King and My Sovereign]**, for which he also composed the music, first appeared in both Spanish and English in the *Supplement to the Book of Hymns* (1982) and then in the UMH (180) with a new translation by George Lockwood. Despite the fact that it was written in a nineteenth-century gospel song style, this signature text reflects important aspects of his indigenous culture:

> O Jesus, my King and my Sovereign,
> my joy is to sing him my praise.
> He's king, yet he treats me like family,
> he's king, yet he shared all his love.
> He left all his glory in heaven
> to come lift my life from the ashes (1).[7]

The hymn "captures strong Mexican theological values of the paradox of Jesus as *familia* [family] and friend," writes Hawn, "yet one who is King and Lord."[8] The hymn concludes with an affirmation of the need to serve and love the One who came in solidarity and humility. In a letter from Mendoza to Carlton Young, the hymn writer indicated that this hymn was inspired by his reflections on the paradox of Jesus Christ who not only reigned over his life but also accepted him as one would a family member.[9]

Tzu Chen Chao (1888–1979), born in China to Buddhist parents, was educated by Methodist missionaries at Dongwu University, baptized in 1908, and prepared for the Methodist ministry at Vanderbilt University Divinity School in the United States during the First

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7 Words: Vicente Mendoza; trans. Esther Frances and George Lockwood ©1982, 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House (admin. by Music Services). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

8 Hawn, *New Songs*, 275.

9 Carlton R. Young, *Companion to The United Methodist Hymnal* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993), 439.

World War.[10] After his return to China he taught at his alma mater before appointment as professor of theology at Yenching University in Beijing in 1926. Two years later Chao became dean of the School of Religion, serving in that capacity until 1952. Enduring great hardships throughout the course of his life, he was imprisoned in 1942 during the Sino-Japanese war and was ultimately removed from his academic position in 1952 as a consequence of the "cultural revolution" under Chairman Mao.

Six of Chao's hymns, all translated into English by Frank W. Price, are included in *Hymns from the Four Winds* (1983), a supplemental worship resource that introduced Asian hymns for the first time to United Methodists. Their titles indicate the focus on the being of God, the role of the Holy Spirit, and the nature of Jesus; the idioms of the various settings demonstrate the breadth of Chao's religio-cultural adaptation:

"God, We Praise You for This Lord's Day" (6)
Buddhist chant
"Great Are Your Mercies, Heavenly Father" (7)
Chinese folk song
"May the Holy Spirit's Sword" (13)
Ancient Ts'ŭ melody
"Praise Our God Above" (81)
Confucian chant
"Jesus Loved Each Little Child" (98)
Chinese folk song
"Jesus Merciful" (100)
Chinese traditional melody

One of Chao's most popular hymns, "Rise to Greet the Sun," appears as his only hymn in the UMH (678) but was first published in 1936 in *Hymns of Universal Praise*.[11] I-to Loh explains how Chao utilized beautiful imagery to depict "the rising sun as strong as a warrior or as handsome as a bridegroom (which is not shown in the

10 See "Tzu Chen Chao," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/t/tzu-chen-chao; accessed April 21, 2019.

11 Young, *Companion*, 569.

English translation). This hymn is also a prayer for guidance and trust that God will provide in a blessed, simple life."[12]

Chao's lyrical theology in these hymns can be summarized in two simple statements: God is our provider and refuge. We owe God our praise and service. Reminded of God's mercy, the singers "trust God's great care" (7:2:6). Terse statements and simple language about God punctuate the community's praise: "God's life, God's love, / Life so great, Love divine" (13:3:5-6). On our part, the Holy Spirit bids us "give up all" (13:1:3). Chao calls upon all to "praise [God's] goodness now and always" (6:1:2). The hymn "Great Are Your Mercies" encapsulates the essence of Christian vocation: "Let me praise you always / Serve you all my days" (7:1:3-4). Chao's signature hymn, "**Praise Our God Above**," expresses this doxological theology in the mode of a Confucian chant that binds the singer to the earth and celebrates God's provision in harvesttime:

> Praise our God above
> For such boundless love:
> Spring wind, summer rain,
> Then the harvest grain;
> Pearly rice and corn,
> Fragrant autumn morn.
> Though our work is hard,
> God gives us reward.
>
> God's care like a cloak
> Wraps us country folk.
> It makes green things grow,
> Ripens what we sow.
> Through God we are strong;
> Sing our harvest song.
> Sing praise, field and flower,
> Praise such mighty power (81).

Tokuo Yamaguchi (1900–1995) received his theological training at Aoyama Gakuin University in 1924 and thereafter served as a

12 I-to Loh, *Hymnal Companion to "Send the Bamboo": Asian Hymns in Their Cultural and Liturgical Context* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2011), 62.

Methodist pastor in several appointments before the Second World War.[13] In 1937 he was called as pastor to the famous Toyohashi Church, which became part of the United Church of Christ at the outset of World War II. Yamaguchi, who served as pastor there for over forty years, was a passionate student of John Wesley, translating his famous journal into Japanese in 1961. His most famous hymn and signature text, **"Sekai no tomo to te o tsuna gi" [Here, O Lord, Your Servants Gather]**, composed in 1958, was included in *Hymns from the Four Winds* (1983) and subsequently in the UMH (552). Isao Koizumi arranged the tune, TOKYO, in the Japanese Gagaku mode, a form of royal court music with ancient Chinese origins. Yamaguchi offers a vision of peace and unity based upon Jesus' claim to be the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). The vision of God's shalom dominates his text:

> Many are the tongues we speak,
> scattered are the lands,
> yet our hearts are one in God,
> one in love's demands.
> E'en in darkness hope appears,
> calling age and youth:
> Jesus, teacher, dwell in us,
> For you are the Truth (552:2).[14]

Hugh Sherlock (1905–1998), a native-born Jamaican representing Caribbean Methodism, entered the ministry in 1932.[15] With exceptional skill in both pastoral and administrative roles, he served for some years with distinction as chairman of the Jamaica District before his election as the first president of the newly autonomous Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas. In retirement he served as the secretary of the World Methodist Council from 1972 to 1977 in Geneva, Switzerland. Known for his poetic gifts, Sherlock

13 See "Tokuo Yamaguchi," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/t/tokuo-yamaguchi; accessed April 20, 2019.

14 Words: Tokuo Yamaguchi; phonetic transcription from the Japanese by I-to Loh © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House (Admin. by Music Services ASCAP). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

15 On Sherlock's life and work, see Yvonne O. Coke, *Eternal Father Bless Our Land: Father Hugh Sherlock, His Story* (Kingston, Jamaica: LMH Publishing Ltd., 2001).

was invited to write the words of the Jamaican National Anthem, "Eternal Father Bless Our Land," first sung at the independence celebration of 1962. He later collaborated with an Irish Methodist minister and musician serving in Jamaica, Charles Eyre, in the production of a small collection of hymns—Sherlock's texts with Eyre's and several other composers' tunes.

Sherlock's most famous hymn, "**Lord, Your Church on Earth Is Seeking**," appeared in the British Methodist *Hymns & Songs* (1969).[16] This signature text opens with a metaphor about language:

> Lord, your church on earth is seeking
> power and wisdom from above:
> teach us all the art of speaking
> with the accents of your love (42:1:1-4).[17]

Essentially a hymn about the church, Sherlock emphasizes the mission of God's people in the world based on the Great Commission (Matt 28). In the second stanza he calls upon God to "lift the burdens caused by sin"; restore hope, strength, and courage; and free all from fear. Drawing imagery from the famous prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, he asks for God's transforming grace that can exchange:

> Light for darkness, joy for sorrow,
> love for hatred, peace for strife—
> these and countless blessings follow
> as the Spirit gives new life (42:2:5-8).

The impetus for the third and final stanza was the important work Sherlock inaugurated in a deprived area of Kingston—what he called "Operation Friendship"—reflecting the spirit and vision of the social gospel.[18] As Paul Schilling observes, "Telling of God's mercy 'in all lands and with all races' means responding concretely to the urgent needs of burdened people."[19] Sherlock's lyrical theol-

16 Quoting here the modernized version of Michael Saward.

17 Words: Michael Saward © 1982 The Jubilate Group (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

18 Richard Watson, "Hugh Sherlock," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/h/hugh-sherlock; accessed October 15, 2018.

19 S. Paul Schilling, *The Faith We Sing: How the Message of Hymns Can Enhance Christian Belief* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), 129.

ogy reflects a passion for the church, its renewal, and its mission to the dispossessed. As the first significant Jamaican Methodist hymn writer, despite his captivity to a Western idiom, he represents a bridge into a new and liberated age.

Daniel Thambyrajah [*D.T.*] *Niles* (1908–1970) was born in north Ceylon (Sri Lanka) into a Tamil-speaking Christian family, his grandfather having served as a Methodist minister.[20] Soon after Niles's ordination he was catapulted into the emerging ecumenical movement, serving as a delegate to the watershed International Missionary Council meeting held in Tambaram, in the Indian State of Tamil Nadu, in 1938 and many successive ecumenical conferences leading to the birth of the World Council of Churches in 1948. As an extension of his ecumenical work, Niles co-founded the East Asia Christian Conference in 1957. A world-renowned speaker, author, and church leader, his personal world revolved primarily around mission, evangelism, and preaching. But his work as a hymn writer, translator, and hymn book editor, just as much as anything else, extended his influence far beyond East Asia. In 1963 Niles edited the *EACC Hymnal* (1963)—described by Michael Hawn as one of the three most influential Asian hymnals in the twentieth century—in which he published forty-four of his original hymn compositions in Western musical idioms.[21]

Niles's hymns in the EACC collection reflect his deep commitment to the core beliefs of the apostolic faith reclaimed in the ecumenical church. The titles could easily function as the headings of an ecumenical catechism, articulating the primary articles of faith:

"Father, Son, and Spirit" (106)
"The King of Glory" (129)
"God Loves" (111)
"Holy, Most Holy Lamb of God" (4)
"Jesus, Lord of Life" (168)
"Jesus Rose" (125)
"O Bless the Lord" (108)
"Glory to Jesus" (191)

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20 Richard Watson, "Daniel Thambyrajah Niles," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/d/daniel-thambyrajah-niles; accessed October 15, 2018.

21 Hawn, *New Songs*, 281–82.

"Spirit God" (156)
"Spirit, Descend" (197)

The dominant Trinitarian framework of this body of hymns is immediately apparent.

The leading expert on Asian hymnody, I-to Loh, has demonstrated that "**O God in Heaven**," Niles's signature text, was not a Niles translation of the text of Elena Maquiso, as initially surmised, but his original work:

> O God in heaven, grant to thy children
> mercy and blessing, songs never ceasing,
> love to unite us, grace to redeem us,
> O God in heaven, dear Lord, our God.
>
> Jesus, Redeemer, may we remember
> thy gracious passion, thy resurrection.
> Worship we bring thee, praise we shall sing thee,
> Jesus Redeemer, Jesus our Lord.
>
> Spirit descending, whose is the blessing,
> strength for the weary, help for the needy;
> sealed in our kinship, thine be our worship,
> Spirit descending, Spirit adored (UMH 119).[22]

While the text of this hymn could have come easily from the pen of a Western author, the hymn tune, HALAD, originates from the Philippines and gives the song an Asian feel. Moreover, in a number of these hymns Niles teases out cultural elements or weaves cultural values seamlessly into the texts. The refrain for his hymn "Made Through Thy Almighty Word" (EACCH 190) utilizes the term "Namo," which is a traditional ascription of worship. "Spirit God" (EACCH 156) addresses God as would be typical in Niles's native Tamil culture. In his lyrical reflections on the parable of the sower (Matt 13:1-23), "The Seed of Life Is Sown" (EACCH 172), he employs images that would be familiar to the farmer of Sri Lanka. Even after drinking deeply at the well of Western music and poetry, "there is still a thirst," he wrote, "which only our mother's milk can

22 Words: D. T. Niles © 1961, 1964, Christian Conference of Asia (Admin. GIA Publications, Inc.). Used by permission.

satisfy."[23] Swee Hong Lim notes that "the earliest attempt to explore non-Western musical approaches in hymnody can be traced to D. T. Niles."[24] He was simply following his own instructions. "The gospel came to us as a potted plant," he claimed. "We have to break the pot and set the plant in our own soil."[25]

A. T. Olajida Olude (1908–c. 1986), a Nigerian Methodist minister and musicologist, composed the primary example from the mid-twentieth century of a hymn written in an indigenous African idiom, "**Jesus, We Want to Meet**."[26] Arthur Jones, in his volume on *African Hymnody*, describes how Olude was "profoundly upset by the way European-type hymns murdered his language," so he composed more than seventy-five texts and tunes built precisely on the speech tones and patterns of his native Yoruba language.[27] In *New Songs of Celebration Render*, Michael Hawn provides a full case study on this signature text.[28] He describes the way in which this African song had its origins in a mission school where Olude learned a nineteenth-century hymn written by Elizabeth Parsons, translated it into Yoruba, and then composed his own melody for it in 1949. He developed the new song explicitly to counter the use of colonial hymnody. The UMH (661) version of the hymn follows Austin Lovelace's versification of Biodun Adebesin's translation but restores the call-and-response pattern Olude intended and provides optional drumbeat patterns found in traditional Nigerian songs.

In this song often used to open worship, you have the sense of entering a throne room of someone great on a high and holy day. The singer kneels in "awe and fear" to receive the blessing of the

23 D. T. Niles, *Sir, We Would See Jesus: A Study in Evangelism* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1938), 100.

24 Swee Hong Lim, "Music and Hymnody," in *The Oxford Handbook of Methodist Studies*, ed. William J. Abraham and James E. Kirby (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 334.

25 Cited in C. Michael Hawn, "Praying for the World: Exploring Asian Hymnody," *Reformed Worship* 52 (June 1999): 28.

26 On Olude's life and work, see C. Michael Hawn, "Olajida Olude," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/o/olajida-olude; accessed October 15, 2018.

27 Arthur M. Jones, *African Hymnody in Christian Worship: A Contribution to the History of Its Development* (Gwelo, Rhodesia: Mambo Press, 1976), 46.

28 Hawn, *New Songs*, 241–42.

Lord. Olude portrays a powerful God as the community comes to "gather round thy throne," anticipating the "joy of thy victory." The theology of this hymn celebrates a God to whom honor is due and to whom the singer must consecrate "heart and soul." Yet the awe-inspiring One to whom we pray is also "our heavenly Friend." The leader guides the community in its worship, emphasizing the unity of the body of Christ and invokes the Spirit of God who brings healing and fills the Word with meaning.

> Save us and cleanse our hearts,
> lead and guide our acts of praise;
> let our faith from seed to flower raise.
>
> Holy Spirit, make us whole;
> bless the sermon in this place;
> and as we go, lead us, Lord.[29]

In this hymn the community sings "on this thy holy day" eleven times, eliciting a deep sense of celebration in the presence of God.

Federico José Pagura (1923–2016), the Argentinian Methodist upon whom Hawn provides his most extensive case study, represented a second generation of entrepreneurial activity in Latin America.[30] He was elected a bishop of the United Methodist Church in 1969, directing the work of the church in Costa Rica and Panama until 1973 when he returned to Argentina as a theological educator. He was elected president of the Latin American Council of Churches in 1972, where he became known for his courageous championship of human rights, founding the *Movimento Ecumenico por los Dereches Humanos* (Ecumenical Movement for Human Rights) in 1976. Around this same time, Pagura emerged as one of the most famous hymn writers and translators as a consequence of his contributions to *Cancionero Abierto*, a six-volume collection of Latin American hymnody begun in 1974. Nine of his original texts appear in this voluminous work, the most of any single author. His translation of Charles Wesley's "O for a thousand tongues to sing" is included in the UMH (59).

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29 Words: A. T. Olajida Olude, trans. Biodun Adebesin © 1964 Abingdon Press (Admin. by Music Services ASCAP). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

30 Hawn, *New Songs*, 270–74.

Pagura's hymns, as Hawn has indicated, "reflect a passion for seeing Christ in the midst of life's struggles and bold cries for justice."[31] He wrote his first important religious poem as a seminary student in 1943. He experienced his most important breakthrough, perhaps, with his composition of texts to be used with the tango, one of the most important musical forms in Argentina. In the 1970s Pagura wrote a trilogy of "Porque Himnos" [Why hymns] in this style during a time of extreme turmoil for his people. One of these hymnic manifestos, "**Tenemos Esperanza**" [**We Have Hope**], became something like Luther's "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" for the entire Christian community in South America. This signature text fully displays Pagura's lyrical theology of hope. It proclaims that hope derives essentially from Christ who came to live among and suffer with his people. "How is it possible to have hope?" Pablo Sosa asks in an article on Pagura's hymn. "Someone has to raise up our faith before everything is emptied out. It was Federico's turn. He completed the mission of the poet, as he intuited, to put wings to the gospel. To lift up hope with a song."[32] The repeated refrain proclaims:

> In hope we are forever celebrating
> With courage in our struggle we are waiting,
> In trust and reassurance we are claiming,
> This is our song of freedom for all people.

All these pioneers in Methodist indigenous lyrical theology (excepting Federico Pagura—a second-generation pioneer) were born during the first decade of the twentieth century or before, and all died before the dawn of the twenty-first century. But their groundbreaking efforts to bring the Christian message to life in their own time and contexts—literally all around the world—set in motion a movement of indigenous song that has grown exponentially. These Methodists had been singing for generations, but the rest of the world was now increasingly interested in hearing their songs and singing them.

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31 Hawn, *New Songs*, 270.

32 Pablo Sosa, "Pagura . . . El Cantor," in *Por Eso Es Que Tenemos Esperanza Homenaje al Obispo Federico J. Pagura* (Ouito: CIAI, 1995), 82. English translation by M. Aaron Hawn.

10

Global Praise

Methodist Lyrical Theology Around the World

One particular development during the last decade of the twentieth century made a significant contribution to the dissemination of global song in the Methodist tradition—the United Methodist Global Praise Project. Founded in 1993 by S T Kimbrough Jr., this program of the General Board of Global Ministries brought together leading Methodist (and other) musicians and hymn text composers from around the world to share songs, plan publications, and design conferences to encourage the singing of global songs in local communities of faith. Kimbrough, as general editor, working with Carlton Young, as musical editor, produced recordings that feature a broad diversity of song from every continent: *Global Praise I* (1996, rev. 1997), *Global Praise II* (2000), and *Global Praise III* (2004), as well as a host of other specialized collections and recordings. One of the Global Praise participants, the late Tom Colvin, quite simply described the songs of the world church as songs of praise, solidarity, hope, commitment, and sharing.[1] An amazing constellation of Methodist composers of global song exemplify these theological characteristics.

Nearly all of these creative artists featured in the narrative that follows benefited from this program and participated in the

1 Thomas S. Colvin, "Global Song and Theology: Content," in *Music & Mission: Towards a Theology and Practice of Global Song*, ed. S T Kimbrough Jr. (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, 2006), 53–61.

cross-fertilization in lyrical theology that Global Praise afforded. This chapter reviews the work of two Europeans from Germany and Sweden; Latin Americans from Argentina, Brazil, and the Caribbean; Asian Methodists from Taiwan, South India, and Singapore; and an African from Zimbabwe. These scholar practitioners, all born before 1965, are the senior representatives of an ever-expanding community of international Methodist composers of sacred song that continues to contribute to contemporary lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition.

European Voices

Hartmut Handt (1940–) was born in Wuppertal, Germany, trained for the Methodist ministry at the church's historic seminary in Reutlingen, and has been an avid poet, liturgical scholar, and hymn writer. He contributed a number of hymns to *Von der Gnade singen* [*Singing Grace*], a small European Methodist hymnbook of forty-six selections, edited and published by Ulrike Schuler and S T Kimbrough Jr. in 2010. The same year Handt edited *Im Lied Geboren* [*Born in Song*], a collection of essays on contributions to hymnology in German-speaking Methodism. His hymns demonstrate a concern for the spiritual needs of humanity and the church, particularly for spiritual renewal. In "Jeder braucht Brot" [Lord, we need bread] (VGS 24), he develops a potent progression of thought that moves from our need of bread through God's provision to the ultimate affirmation, "You are the bread that feeds us" (3:1).[2] The second phrase of each stanza acknowledges our need for God's healing drink and concludes with the affirmation, "You are the word that cheers us" (3:3). Handt's signature text on renewal, "**Erwecke und belebe uns**" [**Revive Us and Enliven Us**] (VGS 31a) proclaims:

> You give us freedom to call God our father.
> You make us children in your new bond.
> You give us freedom to call God our mother.
> You fill our hearts; prayer and praises expand (1).[3]

2 English translation by S T Kimbrough Jr.

3 "Erwecke und belebe uns" Words © 2004 Hartmut Handt, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308. Copyright@umcmission.

The hymn concludes "You are the Spirit, the life-changing Spirit. / You prove God's promises really come true." Both hymns emphasize God's power to restore all things.

Tomas Boström (1953–), a Swedish Methodist pastor / song writer / performer, contributed one hymn to *Von der Gnade singen*, but he has had an illustrious career in lyrical and musical entrepreneurship. For many years he has made a unique study of Charles Wesley's hymns.[4] His practice entails immersing himself in a Wesley text, translating his impressions, sentiments, and understanding into a new lyrical expression in Swedish, and then composing a new tune for his own words. The product of this process is a new hymn, inspired by English words, but translated into a completely new idiom that is culturally relevant and vital for his own context.[5] In 2007 Boström published a selection of these songs in a CD recording entitled *Ad populum* [*For the people*], because he wanted to target a largely secularized Swedish audience, which he describes as "a solid earth-bound people living in peace and feeling safe in their welfare system."[6] Jean-Pierre van Noppen describes Boström's work as an experiment in *aggiornamento* (bringing up to date). The opening stanza of his "blues" adaptation—as he calls it—of Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," "**Göm mig I din kärleksfamn**" [**Hide Me in Your Loving Arms**], illustrates this creative endeavor:

> Hide me in your loving arms
> Hide me Jesus close to you
> Now the raging storm bellows
> But your name is safe and true
> With your calm my soul is blest
> Even in my hurricanes

4 See his interesting discussion of Wesley textual translation in Tomas Boström, "To Translate a Heartbeat," *Proceedings of The Charles Wesley Society* 6 (1999–2000): 9–12.

5 See the discussion of this process in S T Kimbrough Jr., "Charles Wesley's Hymns in Languages of Continental Europe after 1945," *Methodist History* 51:1 & 2 (October 2012 & January 2013): 83.

6 Cited in Jean-Pierre van Noppen, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word became Song," 8; Academia: https://www.academia.edu/1170036/In_the_beginning_was_the_Word_and_the_Word_became_Song; accessed April 19, 2019.

You're my refuge, you're my rest
Whisper through my stormy rains (AP 5).[7]

While retaining the key images of the original in three semantic fields—tempest/storm, safety/refuge, and trust/grace—this new and signature text, and particularly the folk music idiom he employs, bring fresh meaning to them.

Boström feels compelled to stretch hearts and minds. He speaks about God with utmost honesty, often reflecting the *sturm und drang* [storm and stress] in his own spirit. He writes, "Is there some consolation for sorrow? Is there still some light to be found among the extinguished flames?" Directly addressing God, he then exclaims, "If you exist, come to me. If you exist, be here. Fill my sorrow with life, you who yourself are life."[8] In "Jag tror på en Gud" [I believe in a God] (SG 38), Boström offers a vision of God that pushes beyond conventional language:

I believe in a God, one only,
A godchild of humankind.
With love and with truth he opens
Eternity in my mind.

I believe in a God, one only,
one Spirit, a mystery,
that's breathing with me [from] now on,
and into eternity.[9]

The lyrical theology of contemporary Methodists in Europe demonstrates a deep concern for a community of faith that has been pushed to the periphery of society, lacking relevance and requiring renewal. While deeply rooted in the heritage of faith and a vision of grace, these song writers seek to break out of dry and arid molds of the past, struggling with difficult theological questions and issues, and creating a new language that touches the lives of people in meaningful ways.

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7 Words & Music: Tomas Boström © 2007. Used by permission.

8 Quoted in Sven Åke Selander, "Human Language between Christian and Secular," in *The Human Image of God*, ed. Hans-Geng Ziebertz et al (Boston: Brill, 2001), 132.

9 Words & Music: Tomas Boström © 2007. Used by permission.

Latin American and Caribbean Voices

Pablo D. Sosa (1933–) is a composer, church musician, hymnbook editor, and local pastor of the Evangelical Methodist Church in Argentina.[10] He served for many years as a professor of liturgy and hymnology at the Instituto Universitario ISEDET in Buenos Aires. His musical studies carried him from his native Argentina to the United States and Germany. In 1970 Sosa was invited to be a liturgical and musical *animateur* [animator]—a director of worship at major conferences of the World Council of Churches or other ecumenical agencies—and provided this leadership for multiple international ecumenical gatherings. One of his most significant editorial projects, to which he contributed his own hymns as well, was the production of *Cancionero Abierto*, the multivolume collection of Latin American hymnody published after nearly two decades of ongoing labor in 1990. He has composed many hymns and sacred songs for Christian congregational use, many of them in the folk music genres of Latin America. In 2012 the Instituto Universitario ISEDET deposited his many publications and compositions in the "Pablo Sosa Collection."

One of Sosa's best-known works, "**El cielo canta alegria**" [**Heaven Is Singing for Joy**] (1958) was the first Christian song ever composed in the *carnavalito* style, reflecting popular Argentinian dance rhythms of the Incan empire. According to the performance practice notes, the song is usually danced as a community round, in an exhilarant mood. It celebrates fiesta, one of the central themes in Sosa's lyrical theology, a response to the pervasiveness of suffering in life. "Out of oppression, men and women rise up to celebrate, not forgetting their struggle, to be nurtured by the sweet foretaste of the great fiesta of victory and liberation," Sosa writes. "[This] is fiesta that liberates."[11] The hymn consists of a leading *estribillo* [refrain]—"Heaven is singing for joy, alleluia!"—and short stanzas,

10 On Sosa's life and work, see Werner Ewald, "Pablo Sosa," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/p/pablo-sosa; accessed October 15, 2018; cf. C. Michael Hawn, *Gather into One: Praying and Singing Globally* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), 32–71.

11 Pablo Sosa, "Spanish American Hymnody: A Global Perspective," in *The Hymnology Annual: An International Forum on the Hymn and Worship*, Vol. 3, ed. Vernon Wickler (Berrien Springs, MI: Vande Vere Publishing, 1993), 68. Cited in C. Michael Hawn, ed., *New Songs of Celebration Render:*

all revealing simple profundities. All heaven sings because God's glory shines in our lives (first stanza), because our lives are united in God's love (second stanza), and because they will continually bear witness to God (third stanza). As Michael Hawn notes, "For many Latin American Christians the experience of their indigenous musical idioms in worship symbolizes freedom from oppression."[12] Indeed, Sosa himself has written that in our songs we must pray for justice, denounce injustice, and lead the people of God into acts for justice. Our global songs cannot ignore this fact. "*Our global songs cannot legitimize an unjust social order. Our global songs will pray for justice, will denounce injustice, will lead us to act for justice*, or they will not truly be global."[13] Methodists dance this sung theology of justice.

Simei Monteiro (1943–), a Guarani composer of both song texts and tunes, as well as a student of Sosa's, expresses the same concerns about indigeneity and her craft. "I felt very strongly that we Brazilians should be expressing our faith in our own musical traditions," she writes. "I committed myself to compose music which would be ours and through which we could sing our faith."[14] Born in the northern Amazon region of Brazil, Monteiro studied both music and theology, later serving as a professor on the *Faculdade de Teologia de Igreja Metodista* [Faculty of Theology of the Methodist Church] in São Paulo. Always fascinated by the relationship between liturgical song and theology, she explored this theme in a thesis later published as *O Cântico da Vida* [The Song of Life] (1991). According to Werner Ewald, it was during a special seminar on J. B. Metz's "Theology of the World" held by the Methodist liberation theologian, José Miguez Bonino, that the words and music of "*A Nova Canção*" [The New Song] came to Monteiro almost simultaneously. Sosa translated this early composition

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Congregational Song in the Twenty-First Century (Chicago: GIA Pub., 2013), 265.

12 Hawn, *New Songs*, 268.

13 Pablo Sosa, "Global Song and Globalization: Sharing God's Gifts of Creation and Culture," in S T Kimbrough, ed., *Music & Mission* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, 2006), 95.

14 Simei Monteiro, "Singing the Lord's Song—in Portuguese with a Brazilian Beat," in Elizabeth L. Howard, ed., *People Just Like These: Stories of Persons in Mission Serving Around the World*, Vol. II (Denver, CO: Global Mission Partners, 1992), 12.

into Spanish, and asked her permission to include it in the volume of *Cancionero Abierto* he was working on at that time.[15] She participated in the production of the first Brazilian collection of hymns, *A Nova Canção*, published by the Methodist Publishing House in São Paulo. A number of her compositions that enunciate her primary theological themes are included among the seventy international songs of the *Hosanna! Ecumenical Songs for Justice and Peace* (2016).

One of the most consistent themes in Monteiro's indigenous songs, drawn from both her native Guarani culture and her Christian experience, is that of pilgrimage or journey. Her hymn "Tua Palavra na vida" [Your word in our lives] is included in *Global Praise I* (65). Having described the Word of God as the "seed of the Kingdom" (2:2), "food for the least" (2:4), and "the mirror where we see" (3:2), she concludes this powerful litany by singing:

> Your word in our lives, eternal,
> Is light that shines on the long road,
> That leads us to the horizon,
> And the bright Kingdom of God (5).[16]

At a conference on mission and evangelism in 1995, Monteiro described in vivid detail how her people walk. "We see our peoples moving from one place to another," she explained, "going and coming from one part of the country to another, looking for jobs, a better life, dignity, food, nurture. . . . Their song sounds in the way, telling us about the long, long journey."[17] Her signature text, "**Canção da caminhada**" [**If Walking Is Our Vocation**], explores the theology of journey to justice in great detail. In the second stanza, she sings:

> If walking is our vocation, surely we'll walk with each other.
> Our faith will be great and glorious and it will move even mountains.

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15 Werner Ewald with Simei Monteiro, "Simei Monteiro," *Canterbury Dictionary:* http://www.hymnology.co.uk/s/simei-monteiro; accessed October 15, 2018.

16 Words: Simei Monteiro © 2000. Used by permission.

17 Simei Monteiro, "Evangelization and Music in a Latin American Context from a Wesleyan Perspective," in S T Kimbrough Jr., ed., *Evangelization, The Heart of Mission: A Wesleyan Perspective* (New York: GBGM, 1995), 134.

We'll open frontiers of challenge removing all human barriers
because we now follow Christ in hope and joyful solidarity.[18]

Monteiro's hymns reveal a lyrical theology of "the way" upon which we journey, often characterized by struggle, but ever moving toward God's vision of shalom.

George Mulrain (1946–), a Methodist minister from Trinidad and Tobago and former president of the Methodist Church in the Caribbean and the Americas, enjoys composing sacred song in a calypso style.[19] He studied for the ministry at the principal Methodist seminary in Kingston, Jamaica, the United Theological College of the West Indies; served as a circuit minister in Haiti; and has traveled extensively and worked among the various islands of the region. Mulrain's time in Haiti provided the impetus for his doctoral studies at the University of Birmingham in England, subsequently publishing his findings on the "Theological Significance of Haitian Folk Religion." He has devoted much energy to the synthesis of Caribbean music and Wesleyan theology. "Music is the servant of theology in that it enhances our understanding of the God who is present and in control of the universe," he has claimed. "In every given context where men and women do theology, there is a type of music that is best suited to affirming God's presence."[20] His hymn texts reveal this penchant for indigenization as well.

While a member of the Global Praise Working Group, Mulrain compiled the songbook *Caribbean Praise* (2000), to which he contributed a number of selections. Scripture figures prominently in his hymns, with narratives often reformulated in simple lyrical paraphrase. In the more complex composition "Halleluja," he interfaces the "I am" sayings of Jesus from the Gospel of John, with textual variants of Augustus Toplady's "Rock of Ages Cleft for Me" and the Caribbean folk tune style (*Global Praise I*, 31). Likewise, his paraphrase of Psalm 42, "**The Thirsty Deer Longs for the Streams**,"

18 Words: Simei Monteiro © 1997. English translation by Jaci Maraschin. Used by permission.

19 See S T Kimbrough Jr., "George Mulrain," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/g/george-mulrain; accessed October 15, 2018.

20 George Mulrain, "Music and Black Caribbean Theology," *Black Theology in Britain: A Journal of Contextual Praxis* 1 (October 1998): 1.

blends the old with the new (*Global Praise I*, 24). As Michael Hawn indicates, Mulrain's signature text "reflects a Caribbean spirit that relies on God regardless of the natural or political difficulties."[21] While the refrain simply reiterates the language of the psalmist, the second stanza affirms "I'm never alone when I sing" (2:1), and the final stanza further establishes the singer's confidence in God.

> The wicked may make fun of me
> and tease me if I am depressed;
> but I am confident that God will rescue me,
> yes, God always done this in times passed (3).[22]

Mulrain's hymns mirror the emphases he has identified in Caribbean theology: liberation, development, justice, hope, and peace.[23]

The lyrical theology of Latin America and the Caribbean strikes a strong note of justice. The echoes of Methodist Latin American liberation theology can be heard and sensed in the words and rhythms of these more fully acculturated texts. They reflect the sentiments of a Methodist theologian like José Miguez Bonino, who believed the oppressive social situations demanded a new theology. This new theology, now embedded in a fully indigenized Latin American hymnody, affirms the ethical responsibility and commitment of the Christian community to "stand with the disadvantaged people."[24]

Asian Voices

I-to Loh (1936–) is the son of a Presbyterian minister in Taiwan and the only exception to the "Methodist rule" in this study. Despite the fact he never abandoned his Reformed heritage, he has been involved directly with the Methodists throughout the course of his life, and he served as a missionary under the auspices of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries for years. I boldly

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21 Hawn, *New Songs*, 278.

22 "The Thirsty Deer" Words © 1996 George Mulrain, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308. Copyright@umcmission.

23 George Mulrain, "Theology in the Caribbean," *The Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 15, 1–2 (Fall-Spring 1987): 226–28.

24 Thomas A. Langford, *Practical Divinity: Theology in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 251.

and, I believe, justifiably claim him as a "Methodist."[25] Because of his work with ecumenical and interfaith organizations, he is probably the best-known Asian church musician and composer in the Western world today. Like many of the contemporary Methodist authors examined here, he places a high priority on the contextualization of church music.[26] His five-stage paradigm related to this process, developed in "Toward Contextualization of Church Music in Asia," is one of the most widely quoted perspectives. While revolving around music, obviously, the parallelism with regard to the concerns of lyrical theology should not be missed:

1. Imitation of Western gospel hymn style
2. Awareness of one's own culture
3. Rediscovery of identity
4. Syncretism
5. The mature contextualized work[27]

Indeed, Loh makes this connection himself, indicating that Asian Christians "translated and borrowed theologies. All the theologies they learned and expressed were translated from those of the Western theologians; there were no theologies of their own."[28] He draws attention, therefore, to the importance of sacred song as a vehicle for indigenous lyrical theology.

A theologian, ethnomusicologist, hymnbook editor, professor in church music and liturgics, and an accomplished administrator, having served as both dean and president at renowned theological seminaries and universities in Asia, Loh's engagement in the most critical developments of Asian hymnology is unparalleled. In 1972 he compiled *New Songs of Asian Cities* for the Christian Conference of Asia, his first effort at such a task. In 1983 he edited *Hymns from the*

25 Personal communications between the author and S T Kimbrough Jr., who confirmed this judgment on May 16, 2018.

26 On his life and work, see Swee Hong Lim, "I-to Loh," *Canterbury Dictionary*: http://www.hymnology.co.uk/i/i-to-loh; accessed October 15, 2018; cf. Hawn, *Gather into One*, 72–103.

27 I-to Loh, "Toward Contextualization of Church Music in Asia," *Asian Journal of Theology* 4, no. 1 (1990): 293–315.

28 I-to Loh, "In Search for Asian Identities in Asian Hymns: An Overview of Texts and Musical Styles in *Sound the Bamboo*," *Cultural Encounters* 1, 2 (Summer 2005): 89.

Four Winds, one of the "ethnic" supplements to the Methodist *Book of Hymns* (1964), produced in part to "stimulate composition and performance of new Asian American hymns."[29] Without question, Loh's most significant achievement in this regard was his compilation of *Sound the Bamboo* (2000), which features 315 congregational songs in 44 languages and was formally adopted as the official hymnal of the Christian Conference of Asia.

In this amazing collection, Loh's particular contributions, as in his other publications, sound the note of justice distinctively. To a particularly powerful Malaysian hymn, "God of All Gods," he adds a characteristic verse that proclaims good news for the poor and light in the darkness. Because Christ is alive, sinners experience new life, for he brings freedom from their chains (STB 139:3). The gifts of Japanese poet Ko Yuki and I-to Loh the musician/translator combine in "On the Shore of Galilee":

> Through the days of pain and trial,
> And the nights of fearful cries,
> Christ our Savior's ever near;
> He shall overcome our fears.
> Lord, when will you hear our prayers,
> Bring your kingdom down to earth?
> When shall oppression, hate disappear,
> Peace and love forever prevail?[30]

In "**Lord, We Thank You for This Food**," one of the few hymns in which he composes both the musical and lyrical texts, Loh prays:

> Lord, we thank you for this food,
> help us share with all in need;
> body, soul refresh anew
> to live the Gospel,
> serve your people.
>
> Lord, we thank you for this food,
> help us share with all in need;
> body, soul refresh anew

29 I-to Loh, ed., *Hymns from the Four Winds: A Collection of Asian American Hymns* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), ix.

30 *Banquet of Praise* (New York: Bread for the World, 1990), Hymn 205. Words: I-to Loh © 1990. Used by permission.

to live the Gospel,
give your people love (STB 163).[31]

In this sung table grace, his signature text, Loh provides words for a traditional melody from the Bunun people of Taiwan. With regard to the performance practice of this hymn, lower voices sing a "tom tom" rhythm intended to mimic the sounds made when pounding rice. The sung prayer helps the community of faith remember all those workers who provide the food. As is the case in many of his hymns, Loh's lyrical theology calls all to be God's agents of justice in the world.

M. Thomas Thangaraj (1942–), an emeritus professor of the United Methodist Candler School of Theology, has had a distinguished career in missiology with particular concern for the contextualization of the gospel in his native Tamil culture in India. His publications, particularly his experiment in cross-cultural Christology, *The Crucified Guru* (1994), explore the intersection of Indian culture and Christian theology. In addition to his theological explorations, Thangaraj writes hymns in Tamil for use in Indian churches, often composed as simple songs that conform to "the Carnatic tradition in the repetitive *bhajan* structure where a leader sings a phrase and it is repeated by the congregation."[32] The threefold structure also accommodates a Trinitarian theme as is the case in his benedictory hymn "God of creation," included in *Global Praise I*:

God of creation, send us with your love
Child of salvation, send us with your grace
Spirit of communion, send us with your peace.
Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya, amen (8).[33]

In another *Global Praise I* hymn, following the same *bhajan* pattern, each verse repeats the stanza phrases three times: first, "Ocean of love, fill us with love" (50:1); next, "Fountain of joy, rise up in us" (50:2); and, finally, "Light of justice, shine in our lives" (50:3); before a concluding "Amen!" The trilogy of love, grace, and peace

31 Words: I-to Loh © 2000 GIA. Used by permission.

32 Hawn, *New Songs*, 293.

33 "God of Creation" Words and Music © 1996 M. Thomas Thangaraj, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308. Copyright@umcmission.

in Thangaraj's benediction finds parallels of love, joy, and justice in "**Ocean of Love**," his signature text.[34]

Swee Hong Lim (1963–) currently serves as a professor of sacred music at Emmanuel College in Toronto, Canada, having taught previously at Baylor University in Texas and Trinity Theological College in his native Singapore. Since 2011 he has been engaged widely in international ecumenical leadership around the world. As chair of the Committee on Worship and Liturgy for the World Methodist Council, Lim designed and supervised the worship services of the 20th World Methodist Conference in Durban, South Africa. In 2008 he published his doctoral dissertation, an appraisal of the pioneering work of I-to Loh in the area of congregational song, entitled *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*. Like his mentor, Lim's work is primarily in the area of musical contextualization. Concerning his vocation, he writes:

> In essence, I see my music-making effort as exploring my cultural identity as well as a testament to my current passion for postcolonial worship music-making. To that end, my music is not about reclaiming a traditional indigenous sound whatever that means but is about catching a glimpse of God's presence particularly through marginalized or unexpected voicing.[35]

There are a number of hymn text writers to whom Lim is particularly drawn. A Charles Wesley text elicited what is probably his most well-known hymn tune, CHU LUENG, crafted as a contemporary praise and worship song for "Ye Servants of God." To demonstrate its international appeal, it was most recently published in the European Methodist songbook *Von der Gnade singen* (4) in six languages. Lim has also composed tunes for contemporary hymn writers, with Brian Wren, Shirley Erena Murray, and the late Sylvia Dunstan being among his favorites. His first single-author collection of hymns, *Faith, Hope and Love: Songs for the Church* (2017) includes fifty-nine of Lim's original texts and tunes.

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34 "Ocean of Love" Words and Music © 1996 M. Thomas Thangaraj, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308. Copyright@umcmission.

35 Personal communication with the author on June 5, 2018.

Titles from this collection demonstrate the centrality of scripture in Lim's lyrical theology. "A Prophet-Woman Broke a Jar" (2) provides a poignant lyrical paraphrase of the anointing woman in Matthew 26:6-13. He offers new words to pray the Lord's Prayer in "Give Us This Day" (24). Psalm 130 provides the opportunity for Lim to afford an Asian interpretation of life, "Out of the Depth" (44). "Who Is My Mother, Who Is My Brother" (58) expands our vision of the family of God through Lim's lyrical paraphrase of Matthew 12:46-50. His hymns also paint a portrait of God's vision of shalom and the struggle for justice in the world:

> "God of Freedom, God of Justice" (25)
> "In Conflict, Turmoil, War, and Strife" (31)
> "Peace Comes Crying" (46)
> "Peace Is Generosity" (47)

It is too early, perhaps, to declare a signature text for Lim, but of all the hymns in this collection, "**How Long, O God**" (28) would most certainly stand in contention, in one stanza of which he prays:

> How long, O God, will evil prevail?
> Where harsh and cruel acts demean all.
> We long for peace and justice to reign,
> revealing wonder, joy, and love (2).[36]

The concluding stanza signals the victory of God and heralds the establishment of peace with justice through the Son:

> Emmanuel, God's gift has been given;
> rejected, crucified for us all.
> Such Love has shattered Death's fearsome grip,
> God's power has set the captives free (3).

I-to Loh identifies the prominent themes of Asian lyrical theology, specifically those addressed in *Sound the Bamboo*—themes well-represented in the hymnody of the Asian Methodist tradition. "There are four general themes, which are prevalent among Asian Christians," he observes: "Devotion and Personal Salvation, Christmas, Social Concerns: Justice and Human Rights, and Images of God

36 Words: Lim Swee Hong © 2016 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

and Christ."[37] But among these, the quest for peace and justice surfaces more frequently among Methodists than any other theme.

A Voice from Africa

Patrick Matsikenyiri (1937–) is the foremost contributor to sacred song in African Methodism today.[38] Born in Zimbabwe, and having lived through the struggle for independence from colonial rule, African music carried him and the Methodist community through some of the most difficult days of this journey. Some of his earliest compositions were used by freedom fighters and assisted Canaan Banana, a Methodist minister himself and the first state president of liberated Zimbabwe. These represented Matsikenyiri's first efforts to forge an indissoluble link between the political and contextual realities of life and spiritual liberation. In the midst of the struggle for independence he was catapulted to international recognition through his work with the World Council of Churches in successive international conferences and assemblies as an "animateur." He became involved in the Global Praise Program in the early 1990s and contributed original songs to all three volumes of *Global Praise*.

In 1998 Matsikenyiri compiled the *Africa Praise Songbook: Songs from Africa*, a small collection of twenty-two items, five of which are his original texts and tunes. In his prefatory comments to the volume he describes the centrality of singing to African cultures:

> When Africans sing, they involve themselves completely; they live the music! Therefore, they sing with great depth of meaning and their songs reflect the moods of their lives, personally and corporately. . . . For Africans singing is an organic experience of the whole person God has created. So let yourself go and sing not only with your lips and vocal chords, but with your whole God-given body! Move to the rhythm of the Spirit!"[39]

Matsikenyiri subscribes to a "lived lyrical theology," undergirded by the famous Shona proverb: "If you can talk, you can sing.

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37 I-to Loh, "In Search for Asian Identities," 94.

38 On his life and work, see Hawn, *Gather into One*, 148–88.

39 Patrick Matsikenyiri, compiler, *African Praise Songbook: Songs from Africa* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, 1998), v.

If you can walk, you can dance." Most recently he published *Njalo (Always): A Collection of 16 Hymns in the African Tradition* (2006) with Dan Damon.

To be in the presence of Patrick Matsikenyiri is to find oneself caught up in joy. Even his texts that cry out for justice resound with this primary keynote. I first came to know him in 1993 when he returned to Zimbabwe to assume leadership of the Africa University Choir, which began in our living room in Mutare. Initially we all simply shared the songs of our various cultures and sang in informal worship services at the university on Sundays. Needless to say, Matsikenyiri's presence revolutionized and formalized the choir. He has been particularly concerned to adapt traditional Shona music for use in the church, and he has often given credit to women within the life of the church for the indigenization of Christian song. He explains exactly how this happened:

> Africans were forced to live two lives at once. When they were in church they had to sing like missionaries and when they got home they were free to sing with liberty of movement in the accompaniment of the drum, the shaker, and the rattle. . . . Innovative women in the church, and in the United Methodist Church in particular, started to improvise tunes for some of the translated texts which were in the hymn books . . . they would start to sing *Ndindindi ndindi, ndindi vanamai imi* ("Oh, oh, oh you mothers") with movement and ululation in the process. The women's faces would light up with joy and expression.[40]

In virtually all of Matsikenyiri's compositions, the rhythmic melodies and dancing schemes communicate a contagious spirit of rejoicing. From "Sana, Sananina" (APS 19), which he adapted from a Tanzanian song of praise, to "The Dream" (APS 20), which he composed for the official opening of Africa University, his hymns plant joy in the hearts of all who sing and participate in the celebration. His most famous song and signature text, "**Jesu tawa pano**" [**Jesus, We Are Here**] (APS 1) has now been sung on every continent

40 Paul W. Chilcote, "A Singing and Dancing Church," in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists,* ed. Karen Westerfield Tucker (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1996), 243.

of the globe. Originally composed as a gathering song for worship and Holy Communion, the repetitive words and rhythms excite the community into "jubilant praise," to use his words. Michael Hawn notes that the simplicity of the text belies the complexity of all that is being said between the lines in the corporate performance of the song. "Jesu tawa pano," he argues, has a proverbial quality. "It is an expression that one hears at various places throughout a Shona Methodist worship experience, almost as an acclamation. It is an expression of community," Hawn continues. "The congregation is here for Jesus, the one who understands their situation because he has suffered as they now suffer."[41]

The sung words and danced rhythms of this song communicate a theology of joy experienced and lived in community. In songs like "Jesu tawa pano" the singing community acknowledges the presence of the Holy Spirit, calls the gathered faithful to worship God, and celebrates solidarity with the suffering Christ who has overcome the power of evil and death.

41 Hawn, *Gather into One*, 175.

Epilogue

What can we learn from lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition? First, *hymns and sacred songs express and form a community's theology*. From the very beginning, Methodist people have learned and practiced their faith by singing it. Christian hymns and songs have the amazing capacity to engage the whole person—thinking, feeling, and acting—and thereby transform and form a person's spirit in deep and lasting ways. Moreover, since these expressions of lyrical theology are written essentially for singing congregations, they draw people immediately into community and enable them to experience the power of solidarity in Christ.

Second, *it is important to reflect on the lyrical theology communicated through hymns and sacred songs.* The Wesleys communicated a theology rooted in grace and love through their hymns. These lyrical creations exhibit a theology that is deep and broad, richly textured, and thoroughly biblical in its orientation. Methodists since that time, in their efforts to relate these particular concerns in their own times and places, have created new streams of lyrical theology that reveal their own emphases. Methodist hymns, gospel and holiness songs, black gospel music, social gospel hymns, and global songs demonstrate the varieties of Methodist theology but also reflect a concern for sound, biblical, and grace-oriented theology.

Third, *lyrical theology brings together the text and the context* in such a way as to make the story of God's love come alive with relevance and potency. Given the amazing diversity of the world, the community of faith has much to learn from the global Methodist family. When Methodists in one part of the world are able to embrace God's unconditional love as it has been filtered through the life and experience of those from outside their own culture and context, and set to the rhythms and tones of worlds distant from their own, they expand their theological horizon and experience the praise of God more fully.

In his discussion of global song and mission, S T Kimbrough Jr. identifies the theological impact of global song in eight simple statements.[1]

1. Global song extends an invitation to redemption that is personal and universal.
2. Global song stresses universal hope.
3. Global song emphasizes unity.
4. Global song enriches spirituality.
5. Global song shapes our vision of God's inclusive grace.
6. Global song enables the Incarnation of the Word in new ways.
7. Global song helps us personify reconciling, active love.
8. Global song exemplifies a covenantal life.

The lyrical theology reflected in these propositions has been shaped by and will continue to shape the people called Methodists in this new millennium.

It is most fitting, certainly, to close this discussion of lyrical theology in the Methodist tradition with stanzas from one of Charles Wesley's and one of Fred Pratt Green's hymns:

1. Jesus, thou soul of all our joys,
   For whom we now lift up our voice
   And all our strength exert.
   Vouchsafe the grace we humbly claim,
   Compose into a thankful frame
   And tune thy people's heart.

1. When in our music God is glorified,
   and adoration leaves no room for pride,
   it is as though the whole creation cried:
   Alleluia!

1 S T Kimbrough, ed., *Music & Mission: Towards a Theology and Practice of Global Song* (New York: General Board of Global Ministries, 2006), 43–47.

7. Thee let us praise our
common Lord,
And sweetly join with one
accord
Thy goodness to proclaim;
Jesus, thyself in us reveal,
And all our faculties shall feel
Thine harmonizing name.

8. With calmly reverential joy
We then shall all our lives
employ
In setting forth thy love,
And raise in death our
triumph higher,
And sing, with all the
heavenly choir,
That endless song above.[2]

2. How often, making music,
we have found
a new dimension in the
world of sound,
as worship moved us to a
more profound
Alleluia!

3. So has the church, in liturgy
and song,
in faith and love, through
centuries of wrong,
borne witness to the truth in
every tongue,
Alleluia!

4. And did not Jesus sing a
psalm that night
when utmost evil strove
against the light?
Then let us sing, for whom he
won the fight:
Alleluia!

5. Let every instrument be
tuned for praise!
Let all rejoice who have a
voice to raise!
And may God give us faith to
sing always
Alleluia![3]

2 Charles Wesley, *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 2 vols. (Bristol: Farley, 1749), 2:255–56.

3 UMH #68.

Appendix

Methodist Composers of Sacred Songs and Signature Texts

1. Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit;
let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never,
nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish, then, thy new creation;
   pure and spotless let us be.
   Let us see thy great salvation
   perfectly restored in thee;
   changed from glory into glory,
   till in heaven we take our place,
   till we cast our crowns before thee,
   lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #384
Public Domain

2. John Wesley (1703–1791)

1. Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
   whose depth unfathomed no one knows,
   I see from far thy beauteous light,
   and inly sigh for thy repose;
   my heart is pained, nor can it be
   at rest, till it finds rest in thee.

2. 'Tis mercy all that thou hast brought
   my mind to seek its peace in thee;
   yet while I seek, but find thee not,
   no peace my wandering soul shall see.
   O when shall all my wanderings end,
   and all my steps to thee-ward tend?

3. Is there a thing beneath the sun
   that strives with thee my heart to share?
   Ah, tear it thence and reign alone,
   the Lord of every motion there;
   then shall my heart from earth be free,
   when it hath found repose in thee.

4. O Love, thy sovereign aid impart
   to save me from low-thoughted care;
   chase this self-will from all my heart,
   from all its hidden mazes there;
   make me thy duteous child that I
   ceaseless may "Abba, Father" cry.

5. Each moment draw from earth away
   my heart that lowly waits thy call;
   speak to my inmost soul and say,
   "I am thy love, thy God, thy all!"

To feel thy power, to hear thy voice,
to taste thy love, be all my choice.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #414
Public Domain

3. John Bakewell (1721–1819)

1. Hail, thou once despised Jesus!
Hail, thou Galilean King!
Thou didst suffer to release us;
thou didst free salvation bring.
Hail, thou universal Savior,
who hast borne our sin and shame!
By thy merits we find favor;
life is given through thy name.

2. Paschal Lamb, by God appointed,
all our sins on thee were laid;
by almighty love anointed,
thou hast full atonement made.
Every sin may be forgiven
through the virtue of thy blood;
opened is the gate of heaven,
reconciled are we with God.

3. Jesus, hail! enthroned in glory,
there forever to abide;
all the heavenly hosts adore thee,
seated at thy Father's side.
There for sinners thou art pleading;
there thou dost our place prepare;
thou for saints art interceding
till in glory they appear.

4. Worship, honor, power, and blessing
Christ is worthy to receive;
loudest praises, without ceasing,
right it is for us to give.
Help, ye bright angelic spirits,
bring your sweetest, noblest lays;
help to sing of Jesus' merits,
help to chant Emmanuel's praise!

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #325
Public Domain

4. Thomas Olivers (1725–1799)

1. The God of Abraham praise,
who reigns enthroned above;
Ancient of Everlasting Days,
and God of Love;
Jehovah, great I AM!
by earth and heaven confessed;
I bow and bless the sacred name
forever blest.

2. The great I AM has sworn;
I on this oath depend.
I shall, on eagle wings upborne,
to heaven ascend.
I shall behold God's face;
I shall God's power adore,
and sing the wonders of God's grace
forevermore.

3. The heavenly land I see,
with peace and plenty blest;
a land of sacred liberty,
and endless rest.
There milk and honey flow,
and oil and wine abound,
and trees of life forever grow
with mercy crowned.

4. The God who reigns on high
the great archangels sing,
and "Holy, holy, holy!" cry
"Almighty King!
Who was, and is, the same,
and evermore shall be:
Jehovah, Lord, the great I AM,
we worship thee!"

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #116
Public Domain

5. John Adam Granade (1763–1807)

1. I love Thee, I love Thee, I love Thee, my Lord;
I love Thee, my Savior, I love Thee, my God:

I love Thee, I love Thee, and that Thou dost know;
but how much I love Thee my actions will show.

2. I'm happy, I'm happy, oh, wondrous account!
My joys are immortal, I stand on the mount;
I gaze on my treasure and long to be there,
with Jesus and angels and kindred so dear.

3. O Jesus, my Savior, with Thee I am blest,
My life and salvation, my joy and my rest:
Thy name be my theme, and Thy love be my song;
Thy grace shall inspire both my heart and my tongue.

4. Oh, who's like my Savior? He's Salem's bright King;
He smiles and He loves me and helps me to sing:
I'll praise him, I'll praise him with notes loud and clear,
while rivers of pleasure my spirit shall cheer.

Source: Baptist Hymnal (1991) #211
Public Domain

6. Caleb Jarvis Taylor (1763–1817)

1. O Jesus, my Savior, I know Thou art mine;
For Thee all the pleasures of earth I resign;
Of objects most pleasing, I love Thee the best;
Without Thee I'm wretched, but with Thee I'm blest.

Refrain:
O praise the Lord, I'm saved,
I'm saved by the blood of the Lamb;
I'm saved, I'm saved,
O praise the Lord, I'm saved.

2. Thou art my rich treasure, my joy and my love,
No richer's possessed by the angels above;
For Thee all the pleasures of sense I'll forgo
And wander a pilgrim distressed below.
(Refrain)

3. O Jesus, my Savior, in Thee I am blest;
My life and my treasure, my joy and my rest;
Thy grace be my theme, and Thy name be my song;
Thy love doth inspire my heart and my tongue.
(Refrain)

4. Thy Spirit first taught me to know I was blind;
   And taught me the way of salvation to find;
   And when I was sinking in dreadful despair,
   My Jesus relieved me, and bid me not fear.
   (Refrain)

5. In vain I attempt to describe what I feel;
   The language of mortals forever must fail;
   My Jesus is precious, my soul's in a flame;
   I'm raised into raptures while praising His name.
   (Refrain)

6. I find Him in singing, I find Him in prayer;
   In sweet meditation, He always is near;
   My constant companion, oh, may we not part;
   All glory to Jesus who dwells in my heart.
   (Refrain)

7. If ever I loved, sure I love Thee, my Lord,
   I love Thy dear people, Thy ways and Thy word;
   I love all creation, I love sinners, too,
   Since Jesus has died to redeem them from woe.
   (Refrain)

8. Tho' weak and despised, by faith I now stand,
   Preserved and supported by Heaven's kind hand;
   In Jesus supported, I'll bless His dear name,
   Regardless of censure, of praise or of blame.
   (Refrain)

9. When happy in Christ, I regard not the proud,
   Tho' sinners despise me for singing so loud;
   For death will soon call me, and then I shall fly,
   To praise my dear Jesus, in mansions on high.
   (Refrain)

10. There millions of ages my souls shall employ,
    In praising my Jesus, my hope and my joy;
    The glorified spirits and angels around,
    Shall all be delighted to join the glad sound.
    (Refrain)

Source: The Cyber Hymnal #8337
Public Domain

7. John H. Stockton (1813–1877)

1. Come, every soul by sin oppressed,
there's mercy with the Lord;
and he will surely give you rest,
by trusting in his Word.

   Refrain:
   Only trust him, only trust him,
   only trust him now.
   He will save you, he will save you,
   he will save you now.

2. For Jesus shed his precious blood
rich blessings to bestow;
plunge now into the crimson flood
that washes bright as snow.
(Refrain)

3. Yes, Jesus is the truth, the way
that leads you into rest;
believe in him without delay,
and you are fully blest.
(Refrain)

4. Come then and join this holy band,
and on to glory go,
to dwell in that celestial land
where joys immortal flow.
(Refrain)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #337
Public Domain

8. Fanny Crosby (1820–1915)

1. Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

   Refrain:
   This is my story, this is my song,
   praising my Savior all the day long;
   this is my story, this is my song,
   praising my Savior all the day long.

2. Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love.
(Refrain)

3. Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love.
(Refrain)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #369
Public Domain

9. Mary Artemisia Lathbury (1841–1913)

1. Break thou the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
as thou didst break the loaves beside the sea;
beyond the sacred page I seek thee, Lord;
my spirit pants for thee, O Living Word!

2. Bless thou the truth, dear Lord, to me, to me,
as thou didst bless the bread by Galilee;
then shall all bondage cease, all fetters fall;
and I shall find my peace, my all in all.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #599
Public Domain

10. Louisa M. R. Stead (c. 1850–1917)

1. 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
and to take him at his word;
just to rest upon his promise,
and to know, "Thus saith the Lord."

   Refrain:
   Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!
   How I've proved him o'er and o'er!
   Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
   O for grace to trust him more!

2. O how sweet to trust in Jesus,
just to trust his cleansing blood;

and in simple faith to plunge me
neath the healing, cleansing flood!
(Refrain)

3. Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
just from sin and self to cease;
just from Jesus simply taking
life and rest, and joy and peace.
(Refrain)

4. I'm so glad I learned to trust thee,
precious Jesus, Savior, friend;
and I know that thou art with me,
wilt be with me to the end.
(Refrain)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #462
Public Domain

11. Charles H. Gabriel (1856–1932)

1. I stand amazed in the presence
of Jesus the Nazarene,
and wonder how he could love me,
a sinner, condemned, unclean.

Refrain:
How marvelous! How wonderful!
And my song shall ever be:
How marvelous! How wonderful
is my Savior's love for me!

2. For me it was in the garden
he prayed: "Not my will, but thine."
He had no tears for his own griefs,
but sweat-drops of blood for mine.
(Refrain)

3. In pity angels beheld him,
and came from the world of light
to comfort him in the sorrows
he bore for my soul that night.
(Refrain)

4. He took my sins and my sorrows,
he made them his very own;

he bore the burden to Calvary,
and suffered and died alone.
(Refrain)

5. When with the ransomed in glory
his face I at last shall see,
'twill be my joy through the ages
to sing of his love for me.
(Refrain)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #371
Public Domain

12. Lelia Morris (1862–1929)

1. If you are tired of the load of your sin,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If you desire a new life to begin,
Let Jesus come into your heart.

Chorus:
Just now, your doubtings give o'er;
Just now, reject Him no more;
Just now, throw open the door;
Let Jesus come into your heart.

2. If it's for purity now that you sigh,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
Fountains for cleansing are flowing nearby,
Let Jesus come into your heart.
(Chorus)

3. If there's a tempest your voice cannot still,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If there's a void this world never can fill,
Let Jesus come into your heart.
(Chorus)

4. If you would join the glad songs of the blest,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If you would enter the mansions of rest,
Let Jesus come into your heart.
(Chorus)

Source: Baptist Hymnal (2008) #416
Public Domain

13. Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874)

1. Oh now I see the crimson wave,
The fountain deep and wide;
Jesus, my Lord, mighty to save,
Points to His wounded side.

Refrain:
The cleansing stream I see, I see,
I plunge, and O, it cleanseth me!
O praise the Lord! it cleanseth me,
It cleanseth me, yes, cleanseth me.

2. I see the new creation rise,
I hear the speaking blood;
It speaks polluted nature dies,
Sinks 'neath the cleansing flood.
(Refrain)

3. I rise to walk in heaven's own light,
Above the world and sin;
With heart made pure and garments white,
And Christ enthroned within.
(Refrain)

4. Amazing grace! 'tis heaven below
To feel the blood applied,
And Jesus, only Jesus, know,
My Jesus crucified.
(Refrain)

Source: SDA Hymnal (2019) #332
Public Domain

14. Mary D. James (1810–1883)

1. All for Jesus, all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers:
All my thoughts and words and doings,
All my days and all my hours.

Refrain:
All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours;
All for Jesus! All for Jesus!
All my days and all my hours.

2. Let my hands perform His bidding,
   Let my feet run in His ways;
   Let my eyes see Jesus only,
   Let my lips speak forth His praise.
   (Refrain)

3. Worldlings prize their gems of beauty,
   Cling to gilded toys of dust,
   Boast of wealth and fame and pleasure;
   Only Jesus will I trust.
   (Refrain)

4. Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
   I've lost sight of all beside;
   So enchained my spirit's vision,
   Looking at the Crucified.
   (Refrain)

5. Oh, what wonder! how amazing!
   Jesus, glorious King of kings,
   Deigns to call me His beloved,
   Lets me rest beneath His wings.
   (Refrain)

Source: The Cyber Hymnal #92
Public Domain

15. Judson W. Van Deventer (1855–1939)

1. All to Jesus I surrender;
   all to him I freely give;
   I will ever love and trust him,
   in his presence daily live.

   Refrain:
   I surrender all, I surrender all,
   all to thee, my blessed Savior,
   I surrender all.

2. All to Jesus I surrender;
   humbly at his feet I bow,
   worldly pleasures all forsaken;
   take me, Jesus, take me now.
   (Refrain)

3. All to Jesus I surrender;
   make me, Savior, wholly thine;

let me feel the Holy Spirit,
truly know that thou art mine.
(Refrain)

4. All to Jesus I surrender;
Lord, I give myself to thee;
fill me with thy love and power;
let thy blessing fall on me.
(Refrain)

5. All to Jesus I surrender;
now I feel the sacred flame.
O the joy of full salvation!
Glory, glory, to his name!
(Refrain)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #354
Public Domain

16. William Hartsough (1828–1919)

1. I hear Thy welcome voice,
That calls me, Lord, to Thee,
For cleansing in Thy precious blood
That flowed on Calvary.

Refrain:
I am coming, Lord!
Coming now to Thee!
Wash me, cleanse me in the blood
That flowed on Calvary!

2. Though coming weak and vile,
Thou dost my strength assure;
Thou dost my vileness fully cleanse,
Till spotless all, and pure.
(Refrain)

3. 'Tis Jesus calls me on
To perfect faith and love,
To perfect hope and peace and trust,
For earth and Heav'n above.
(Refrain)

4. 'Tis Jesus who confirms
The blessed work within,

By adding grace to welcomed grace,
Where reigned the power of sin.
(Refrain)

5. And He the witness gives
To loyal hearts and free,
That every promise is fulfilled,
If faith but brings the plea.
(Refrain)

6. All hail! atoning blood!
All hail! redeeming grace!
All hail! the gift of Christ our Lord,
Our Strength and Righteousness.
(Refrain)

Source: The Cyber Hymnal #2819
Public Domain

17. George Bennard (1873–1958)

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
the emblem of suffering and shame;
and I love that old cross where the dearest and best
for a world of lost sinners was slain.

Refrain:
So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
and exchange it some day for a crown.

2. O that old rugged cross, so despised by the world,
has a wondrous attraction for me;
for the dear Lamb of God left his glory above
to bear it to dark Calvary.
(Refrain)

3. In that old rugged cross, stained with blood so divine,
a wondrous beauty I see,
for 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered and died,
to pardon and sanctify me.
(Refrain)

4. To that old rugged cross I will ever be true,
its shame and reproach gladly bear;

then he'll call me some day to my home far away,
where his glory forever I'll share.
(Refrain)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #504
Public Domain

18. Thomas O. Chisholm (1866–1960)

1. Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain:
Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

2. Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.
(Refrain)

3. Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
(Refrain)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #140
Public Domain

19. Lucius H. Holsey (1842–1920)

1. O rapturous scenes that wait the day,
When Thou shall call me home,
When I shall here no longer stay,
No longer weep and moan.

2. Long has my heart look'd up to Thee,
My Master and my King,
No other hand can make me free,
And to thy bosom bring.

3. What wondrous grace is this that brings,
   My waiting soul to Thee,
   That makes me scorn all earthly things,
   That I may holy be?

4. Say gracious Lord, where am I now?
   Am I Thy servant still?
   Shall flesh and blood my soul o'erthrow?
   And set at naught Thy will?

5. Nay, but my soul shall rise and fly,
   To that bright world above;
   The heav'nly Canaan in the sky,
   The city of Thy love.

6. Hallelujah! the race is run!
   Eternal life is gained,
   My happiness has just begun,
   The crown of life obtained.

Source: Jon Michael Spencer, *Black Hymnody: A Hymnological History of the African-American Churches*, 46
Public Domain

20. Montgomery (F. M.) Hamilton (1858–1912)

1. There's a happy day soon coming, and the time will not be long,
   When we all shall join together in one grand glorious song,
   Singing with the holy angels in the bright forevermore,
   In that blessed land of promise, Over on the other shore.

2. Thro' the pearly gates we'll enter, walk the streets of shining gold,
   And behold the walls of Jasper as th' apostle once foretold,
   And we'll tell the wondrous story as we've never told before,
   As we walk and talk together, Over on the other shore.

3. "There the wicked cease to trouble and the weary are at rest,"
   In that happy land of promise where we'll evermore be blest,
   There we'll meet with all our loved ones, who have journey'd on before,
   It will be a joyous greeting, Over on the other shore.

Source: Spencer, *Black Hymnody*, 53
Public Domain

21. Charles A. Tindley (1851–1933)

1. When the storms of life are raging,
Stand by me; (stand by me)
When the storms of life are raging,
Stand by me. (stand by me)
When the world is tossing me,
Like a ship upon the sea,
Thou who rulest wind and water,
Stand by me. (stand by me)

2. In the midst of tribulation,
Stand by me; (stand by me)
In the midst of tribulation,
Stand by me. (stand by me)
When the host of hell assail,
And my strength begins to fail,
Thou who never lost a battle,
Stand by me. (stand by me)

3. In the midst of faults and failures,
Stand by me; (stand by me)
In the midst of faults and failures,
Stand by me. (stand by me)
When I do the best I can,
And my friends misunderstand,
Thou who knowest all about me,
Stand by me. (stand by me)

4. In the midst of persecution,
Stand by me; (stand by me)
In the midst of persecution,
Stand by me. (stand by me)
When my foes in battle array
Undertake to stop my way,
Thou who saved Paul and Silas,
Stand by me. (stand by me)

5. When I'm growing old and feeble,
Stand by me; (stand by me)
When I'm growing old and feeble,
Stand by me. (stand by me)
When my life becomes a burden,

And I'm nearing chilly Jordan,
O thou Lily of the Valley,
Stand by me. (stand by me)

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #512
Public Domain

22. Frank Mason North (1850–1935)

1. Where cross the crowded ways of life,
where sound the cries of race and clan,
above the noise of selfish strife,
we hear your voice, O Son of man.

2. In haunts of wretchedness and need,
on shadowed thresholds dark with fears,
from paths where hide the lures of greed,
we catch the vision of your tears.

3. From tender childhood's helplessness,
from woman's grief, man's burdened toil,
from famished souls, from sorrow's stress,
your heart has never known recoil.

4. The cup of water given for you still
holds the freshness of your grace;
yet long these multitudes to view
the sweet compassion of your face.

5. O Master, from the mountainside
make haste to heal these hearts of pain;
among these restless throngs abide;
O tread the city's streets again.

6. Till all the world shall learn your love
and follow where your feet have trod,
till, glorious from your heaven above,
shall come the city of our God!

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #427
Public Domain

23. Georgia Harkness (1891–1974)

1. Hope of the world, thou Christ of great compassion,
speak to our fearful hearts by conflict rent.

Save us, thy people, from consuming passion,
who by our own false hopes and aims are spent.

2. Hope of the world, God's gift from highest heaven,
bringing to hungry souls the bread of life,
still let thy spirit unto us be given,
to heal earth's wounds and end all bitter strife.

3. Hope of the world, afoot on dusty highways,
showing to wandering souls the path of light,
walk thou beside us lest the tempting byways
lure us away from thee to endless night.

4. Hope of the world, who by thy cross didst save us
from death and dark despair, from sin and guilt,
we render back the love thy mercy gave us;
take thou our lives, and use them as thou wilt.

5. Hope of the world, O Christ o'er death victorious,
who by this sign didst conquer grief and pain,
we would be faithful to thy gospel glorious;
thou art our Lord! Thou dost forever reign.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #178
Words: Georgia Harkness © 1954, Ren. 1982 The Hymn Society (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

24. Leon Adkins (1896–1986)

1. "Go, make of all disciples." We hear the call, O Lord,
That comes from thee, our Father, in thy eternal Word.
Inspire our ways of learning through earnest, fervent prayer,
and let our daily living reveal thee everywhere.

2. "Go, make of all disciples," baptizing in the name
of Father, Son, and Spirit, from age to age the same.
We call each new disciple to follow thee, O Lord,
redeeming soul and body by water and the Word.

3. "Go, make of all disciples." We at thy feet would stay
until each life's vocation accents thy holy way.
We cultivate the nature God plants in every heart,
revealing in our witness the master teacher's art.

4. "Go, make of all disciples." We welcome thy command.
   "Lo, I am with you always." We take thy guiding hand.
   The task looms large before us; we follow without fear,
   in heaven and earth thy power shall bring God's kingdom here.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #571
Words: Leon M. Adkins © 1964 Abingdon Press (Admin. by Music Services ASCAP). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

25. William Watkins Reid Jr. (1923–2007)

1. O God of every nation,
   of every race and land,
   redeem the whole creation
   with your almighty hand;
   where hate and fear divide us,
   and bitter threats are hurled,
   in love and mercy guide us,
   and heal our strife-torn world.

2. From search for wealth and power
   and scorn of truth and right,
   from trust in bombs that shower
   destruction through the night,
   from pride of race and station
   and blindness to your way,
   deliver every nation,
   eternal God, we pray.

3. Lord, strengthen all who labor
   that all may find release
   from fear of rattling saber,
   from dread of war's increase;
   when hope and courage falter,
   Lord, let your voice be heard;
   with faith that none can alter,
   your servants undergird.

4. Keep bright in us the vision
   of days when war shall cease,
   when hatred and division
   give way to love and peace,
   till dawns the morning glorious
   when truth and justice reign,
   and Christ shall rule victorious
   o'er all the world's domain.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #435
Words: William Watkins Reid Jr. © 1958 The Hymn Society (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

26. Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)

1. When in our music God is glorified,
   and adoration leaves no room for pride,
   it is as though the whole creation cried:
   Alleluia!

2. How often, making music, we have found
   a new dimension in the world of sound,
   as worship moved us to a more profound
   Alleluia!

3. So has the church, in liturgy and song,
   in faith and love, through centuries of wrong,
   borne witness to the truth in every tongue,
   Alleluia!

4. And did not Jesus sing a psalm that night
   when utmost evil strove against the light?
   Then let us sing, for whom he won the fight:
   Alleluia!

5. Let every instrument be tuned for praise!
   Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
   And may God give us faith to sing always
   Alleluia!

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #68
Words: Fred Pratt Green © 1972 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

27. Richard Blanchard (1927–)

1. Like the woman at the well I was seeking
   For things that could not satisfy;
   And then I heard my Savior speaking:
   "Draw from My well that never shall run dry."

   Chorus:
   Fill my cup, Lord—
   I lift it up, Lord!
   Come and quench this thirsting of my soul;

Bread of heaven, feed me till I want no more—
Fill my cup, fill it up and make me whole!

2. There are millions in this world who are craving
The pleasures earthly things afford;
But none can match the wondrous treasure
That I find in Jesus Christ, my Lord.
(Chorus)

3. So, my brother, if the things this world gave you
Leave hungers that won't pass away,
My blessed Lord will come and save you,
If you kneel to Him and humbly pray.
(Chorus)

Source: Baptist Hymnal (2008) #631.
Words: Richard Blanchard © Word, Inc., renewed 1988. Used by permission.

28. Colin Alexander Gibson (1933–)

1. He came singing love
and he lived singing love;
he died, singing love.
He arose in silence.
For the love to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

2. He came singing faith
and he lived singing faith;
he died, singing faith.
He arose in silence.
For the faith to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

3. He came singing hope
and he lived singing hope;
he died, singing hope.
He arose in silence.
For the hope to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

4. He came singing peace
and he lived singing peace;

he died, singing peace.
He arose in silence.
For the peace to go on
we must make it our song;
you and I be the singers.

Source: Worship & Rejoice (2008) #454
Words: Colin Gibson © 1994 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

29. Brian Richard Hoare (1935–)

1. Born in song!
   God's people have always been singing.
   Born in song!
   Hearts and voices raised.
   So today we worship together;
   God alone is worthy to be praised.

2. Praise to God!
   For he is the one who has made us.
   Praise to God!
   We his image bear.
   Heaven and earth are full of his glory;
   let creation praise him everywhere.

3. Christ is King!
   He left all the glory of heaven.
   Christ is King!
   Born to share in our pain;
   crucified, for sinners atoning,
   risen, exalted, soon to come again.

4. Sing the song!
   God's Spirit is poured out among us.
   Sing the song!
   He has made us anew.
   Every member part of the Body;
   given his power, his will to seek and do.

5. Tell the world!
   All power to Jesus is given.
   Tell the world!
   He is with us always.
   Spread the word, that all may receive him;
   every tongue confess and sing his praise.

6. Then the end!
   Christ Jesus shall reign in his glory.
   Then the end
   of all earthly days.
   Yet above the song will continue;
   all his people still shall sing his praise.

Source: Singing the Faith (2011) #21
Words & Music: Brian Hoare © 1983 The Jubilate Group (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

30. Andrew Pratt (1948–)

1. If God created all we see
   then ours is still a timeless cry;
   we cannot understand God's sense;
   we ask again the reason why.

2. Was this prefigured by a cross,
   this site of human agony;
   the tumbled timbers, broken walls,
   where people struggle to be free?

3. This cannot be the way of God,
   yet God is in this quaking mess,
   is in the people crying out
   in pain and terminal distress.

4. God seeks the dying, nail pierced hands
   reach deep within this grief and loss.
   Our every word or touch of love
   speaks of the gift of grace and cross.

Source: Stainer & Bell, Ltd. (2007)
Words: Andrew Pratt © 2007 Stainer & Bell, Ltd. (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

31. Jane Marshall (1924–)

1. What gift can we bring, what present, what token?
   What words can convey it, the joy of this day?
   When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,
   what song can we offer in honor and praise?

2. Give thanks for the past, for those who had vision,
   who planted and watered so dreams could come true.
   Give thanks for the now, for study, for worship,
   for mission that bids us turn prayer into deed.

3. Give thanks for tomorrow, full of surprises,
   for knowing whatever tomorrow may bring,
   the word is our promise always, forever;
   we rest in God's keeping and live in God's love.

4. This gift we now bring, this present, this token,
   these words can convey it, the joy of this day!
   When grateful we come, remembering, rejoicing,
   this song we now offer in honor and praise!

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #87
Words: Jane Marshall © 1982 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

32. Natalie Sleeth (1930–1992)

1. In the bulb there is a flower;
   in the seed, an apple tree;
   in cocoons, a hidden promise:
   butterflies will soon be free!
   In the cold and snow of winter
   there's a spring that waits to be,
   unrevealed until its season,
   something God alone can see.

2. There's a song in every silence,
   seeking word and melody;
   there's a dawn in every darkness
   bringing hope to you and me.
   From the past will come the future;
   what it holds, a mystery,
   unrevealed until its season,
   something God alone can see.

3. In our end is our beginning;
   in our time, infinity;
   in our doubt there is believing;
   in our life, eternity.
   In our death, a resurrection;

at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #707
Words & Music: Natalie Sleeth © 1986 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

33. John Thornburg (1954–)

1. God the sculptor of the mountains,
God the miller of the sand,
God the jeweler of the heavens,
God the potter of the land:
you are womb of all creation,
we are formless; shape us now.

2. God the nuisance to the Pharaoh,
God the cleaver of the sea,
God the pillar of the darkness,
God the beacon of the free:
you are gate of all deliv'rance,
we are sightless; lead us now.

3. God the dresser of the vineyard,
God the planter of the wheat,
God the reaper of the harvest,
God the source of all we eat:
you are host at every table,
we are hungry; feed us now.

4. God the unexpected infant,
God the calm, determined youth,
God the table turning prophet,
God the resurrected Truth:
you are present every moment,
we are searching; meet us now.

Source: The Faith We Sing (2001) #2060
Words: John Thornburg © 1993. Used by permission.

34. Jim Strathdee (1941–)

1. When the song of the angels is stilled.
When the star in the sky is gone.
When the kings and the shepherds have found their way home.
The work of Christmas is begun!

Chorus:
I am the Light of the World
You people come and follow me.
If you follow and love, You'll learn the mystery
Of what you were meant to do and be.

2. To find the lost and lonely one,
To heal that broken soul with love,
To feed the hungry children with warmth and good food,
To feel the earth below the sky above!
(Chorus)

3. To free the prisoner from his chains,
To make the powerful care,
To rebuild the nations with strength and goodwill,
To call a man your brother everywhere.
(Chorus)

4. To bring hope to every task you do,
To dance at a baby's new birth,
To make music in an old man's heart,
And sing to the colors of the earth!
(Chorus)

Source: Chalice Praise (2004) #469
Words: Jim Strathdee © 1969 Desert Flower Music. Used by permission.

35. Constance Cherry (1953–)

1. When will people cease their fighting?
When will armies wage no war,
nations conquer not their neighbor,
weapons idle, used no more?
When will guns and bombs be silent?
When will captives be set free?
All creation groans in longing
for the world's true liberty.

2. Floods and earthquakes, drought and famine
plague the world with awesome ill,
but far greater is war's horror
caused by human, stubborn will.
Blest are those who working, praying,
purpose in their hearts to be
instruments of peace, committed
to the nations' harmony.

3. As we strive for peace with vigor,
   hoping to be shown the way,
   we are strengthened in the knowledge
   of a future, perfect day;
   for we know that deeper, richer
   peace is ours when Christ shall reign;
   then will all our swords be plowshares
   and God's children free from pain.

Source: Proclaim New Hope (2001) #19
Words: Constance Cherry © 1990 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

36. Dan Damon (1955–)

1. Like a child love would send
   to reveal and to mend,
   like a child and a friend,
   Jesus comes.
   Like a child we may find
   claiming heart, soul, and mind,
   like a child strong and kind,
   Jesus comes.

2. Like a child we will meet,
   ragged clothes, dirty feet,
   like a child on the street,
   Jesus comes.
   Like a child we once knew
   coming back into view,
   like a child born anew,
   Jesus comes.

3. Like a child born to pray
   and to show us the way,
   like a child here to stay,
   Jesus comes.
   Like a child we receive
   all that love can conceive,
   like a child we believe,
   Jesus comes.

Source: The Faith We Sing (2000), #2092
Words: Daniel Charles Damon © 1993 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

37. Vicente Mendoza (1875–1955)

1. O Jesus, my King and my Sovereign,
   my joy is to sing him my praise.
   He's king, yet he treats me like family,
   he's king, yet he shared all his love.
   He left all his glory in heaven
   to come lift my life from the ashes.
   I'm happy today,
   life's joy came to stay through him.

2. O Jesus, my friend and my yearning,
   in darkness and light always near;
   he walks at my side, patient, humble,
   and gives me his comfort and cheer.
   That's why I will faithfully follow,
   because he's my King and companion.
   I'm happy today,
   life's joy came to stay through him.

3. O Lord, tell me what could I give you
   for all your great goodness to me?
   Could this be enough; serve and love you,
   committing my whole life to thee?
   If so, then accept my devotion,
   to you only now I surrender.
   I'm happy today,
   life's joy came to stay through him.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #180
Words: Vicente Mendoza © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House (Admin. by Music Services ASCAP). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

38. Tzu Chen Chao (1888–1979)

1. Praise our God above
   For such boundless love:
   Spring wind, summer rain,
   Then the harvest grain;
   Pearly rice and corn,
   Fragrant autumn morn.
   Though our work is hard,
   God gives us reward.

2. God's care like a cloak
   Wraps us country folk.
   It makes green things grow,
   Ripens what we sow.
   Through God we are strong;
   Sing our harvest song.
   Sing praise, field and flower,
   Praise such mighty power

Source: Hymns from the Four Winds (1983) #81
Public Domain

39. Tokuo Yamaguchi (1900–1995)

1. Here, O Lord, your servants gather,
   hand we link with hand;
   looking toward our Savior's cross,
   joined in love we stand.
   As we seek the realm of God,
   we unite to pray:
   Jesus, Savior, guide our steps,
   for you are the Way.

2. Many are the tongues we speak,
   scattered are the lands,
   yet our hearts are one in God,
   one in love's demands.
   E'en in darkness hope appears,
   calling age and youth:
   Jesus, teacher, dwell in us,
   For you are the Truth.

3. Nature's secrets open wide,
   changes never cease.
   Where, oh where, can weary souls
   find the source of peace?
   Unto all those sore distressed
   torn by endless strife:
   Jesus, healer, bring your balm,
   For you are the Life.

4. Grant, O God, an age renewed,
   filled with deathless love;
   help us as we work and pray,

send us from above
truth and courage, faith and power,
Needed in our strife:
Jesus, Master, be our Way,
be our Truth, our Life.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #552
Words: Tokuo Yamaguchi; phonetic transcription from the Japanese by I-to Loh © 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House (Admin. by Music Services ASCAP). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

40. Hugh Sherlock (1905–1998)

1. Lord, your church on earth is seeking
power and wisdom from above:
teach us all the art of speaking
with the accents of your love.
We will heed your great commission
sending us to every place—
'Go, baptize, fulfill my mission;
serve with love and share my grace!'

2. You release us from our bondage,
lift the burdens caused by sin;
give new hope, new strength and courage,
grant release from fears within.
Light for darkness, joy for sorrow,
love for hatred, peace for strife—
these and countless blessings follow
as the Spirit gives new life.

3. In the streets of every city
where the bruised and lonely live,
we will show the saviour's pity
and his longing to forgive.
In all lands and with all races
we will serve, and seek to bring
all the world to render praises
Christ, to you, redeemer king.

Source: Hymns & Songs (1969) #42
Words: Michael Saward © 1982 The Jubilate Group (Admin. Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

41. Daniel Thambyrajah [D. T.] Niles (1908–1970)

1. O God in heaven, grant to thy children
mercy and blessing, songs never ceasing,
love to unite us, grace to redeem us,
O God in heaven, dear Lord, our God.

2. Jesus, Redeemer, may we remember
thy gracious passion, thy resurrection.
Worship we bring thee, praise we shall sing thee,
Jesus Redeemer, Jesus our Lord.

3. Spirit descending, whose is the blessing,
strength for the weary, help for the needy;
sealed in our kinship, thine be our worship,
Spirit descending, Spirit adored.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #119
Words: D. T. Niles © 1961, 1964, Christian Conference of Asia (Admin. GIA Publications, Inc.). Used by permission.

42. A. T. Olajida Olude (1908–c. 1986)

1. Jesus, we want to meet on this thy holy day;
we gather round thy throne on this thy holy day.
Thou art our heavenly Friend;
hear our prayers as they ascend;
look into our hearts and minds today,
on this thy holy day.

2. We kneel in awe and fear, on this thy holy day;
pray God to teach us here on this thy holy day.
Save us and cleanse our hearts,
lead and guide our acts of praise;
let our faith from seed to flower raise
on this thy holy day.

3. Thy blessing, Lord, we seek, on this thy holy day;
give joy of thy victory on this thy holy day.
Through grace alone are we saved;
in thy flock may we be found;
let the mind of Christ abide in us
on this thy holy day.

4. Our minds we dedicate on this thy holy day;
heart and soul consecrate on this thy holy day.

Holy Spirit, make us whole;
bless the sermon in this place;
and as we go, lead us, Lord;
we shall be thine evermore.

Source: United Methodist Hymnal (1989) #661
Words: A. T. Olajida Olude, trans. Biodun Adebesin © 1964 Abingdon Press (Admin. by Music Services ASCAP). All rights reserved. Used by permission.

43. Federico José Pagura (1923–2016)

1. Because he came into the world and history;
Because he broke the silence and the agony;
Because he filled the earth with his glory;
Because he was light in our cold night;

Because he was born in a dark manger;
Because he lived sowing love and life;
Because he opened up the hard hearts
And lifted up the downcast souls.

Chorus:
That's why we have hope today,
That's why we fight tenaciously today,
That's why today we look with confidence
To the future of this land of mine.

2. Because he attacked the ambitious merchants
And denounced evil and hypocrisy;
Because he exalted the children, the women,
And rejected those who burn with pride;

Because he carried the cross of our suffering
And tasted the bitterness of our ills;
Because he accepted to suffer our condemnation
And thus died for all mortals.
(Chorus)

3. Because a dawn saw his great victory
Over death, and fear, and lies;
Now nothing can stop his story
Or the coming of his eternal kingdom;

Because it illuminates every path in glory
and the darkness we defeat with fire;

because its light is always our story
and has to take everyone to the top.
(Chorus)

Source: Mil Voces para Celebrar (1996) #129
Public Domain

44. Hartmut Handt (1940–)

Refrain:
Revive us, and enliven us,
O Spirit of freedom.
Enlighten and encourage us,
O Spirit of God.

1. You give us freedom to call God our father.
   You make us children in your new bond.
   You give us freedom to call God our mother.
   You fill our hearts; prayer and praises expand.
   (Refrain)

2. You are the witness that through us God's working.
   You tear our fear and our sloth from us.
   You are the witness that through us God's working.
   You furnish gifts and God's grace flows through us.
   (Refrain)

3. You are the courage, the life-changing courage.
   You strengthen hearts with God's light anew.
   You are the Spirit, the life-changing Spirit.
   You prove God's promises really come true.
   (Refrain)

Source: Von der Gnade singen (2010) #31a
"Erwecke und belebe uns" Words © 2004 Hartmut Handt, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308. Copyright@umcmission.

45. Tomas Boström (1953–)

1. Hide me in your loving arms
   Hide me Jesus close to you
   Now the raging storm bellows
   But your name is safe and true
   With your calm my soul is blest
   Even in my hurricanes

You're my refuge, you're my rest
Whisper through my stormy rains

2. When I'm helpless let me know
When I'm sinking like a stone
I can have my trust in you
All my trust in you alone
When the waves are high and rough
When the storm is cold and hard
Your care for me is enough
And your love will be my guard

3. No one else but you can bring
What an inner life requires
From the youth within and spring
Till the autumn of my life
Meet the doubt in me with trust
And my darkness with your light
Blow away all years of dust
That concealed you from my sight

4. Show the lost in me the way
And the liar in me the truth
Paint a rainbow in my grey
Shine upon my shady road
Take me over highest ways
Take me through the deepest sea
Touch me with the grace that saves
Love of all eternity

Source: Boström, Ad populum
Words & Music: Tomas Boström © 2007. Used by permission.

46. Pablo Sosa (1933–)

1. Heaven is singing for joy, alleluia,
for in your life and in mine
is shining the glory of God.
Alleluia, alleluia!

2. Heaven is singing for joy, alleluia,
for your life and mine
unite in the love of our God.
Alleluia, alleluia!

3. Heaven is singing for joy, alleluia,
   for your life and mine
   will always bear witness to God.
   Alleluia, alleluia!

Source: GIA (1958)
Words: Pablo Sosa © 1958 GIA. Used by permission.

47. Simei Monteiro (1943–)

1. If walking is our vocation, surely we'll walk with each other.
   and on this journey our footsteps will be sustained by our bodies.
   We'll be no longer like nothing without a voice or a history
   but a renewed holy church in hope and joyful solidarity.

2. If walking is our vocation, surely we'll walk with each other.
   Our faith will be great and glorious and it will move even
   mountains.
   We'll open frontiers of challenge removing all human barriers
   because we now follow Christ in hope and joyful solidarity.

3. If walking is our vocation, surely we'll walk with each other.
   Alone our voice in the desert in awe will bring forth new fountains,
   and the new life in this planet a feast is anticipating,
   God is alive in our midst in hope and joyful solidarity.

Source: Global Praise I (1997) #15
Words: Simei Monteiro © 1997. Used by permission.

48. George Mulrain (1946–)

1. The thirsty deer longs for the streams,
   my thirsty soul longs for our God.
   I have been weeping aloud
   all day and all night,
   as I long for the face of our God.

2. I'm never alone when I sing,
   declaring the wonders of God.
   The crowds in God's holy house,
   they all join with me
   just to proclaim how God's great and good.

3. The wicked may make fun of me
   and tease me if I am depressed;
   but I am confident that God will rescue me,
   yes, God always done this in times passed.

Source: Global Praise I (1997) #24
"The Thirsty Deer" Words © 1996 George Mulrain, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308. Copyright@umcmission.

49. I-to Loh (1936–)

1. Lord, we thank you for this food,
   help us share with all in need;
   body, soul refresh anew
   to live the Gospel,
   serve your people.

2. Lord, we thank you for this food,
   help us share with all in need;
   body, soul refresh anew
   to live the Gospel,
   give your people love.

Source: Sound the Bamboo (2000) #163
Words: I-to Loh © 2000 GIA. Used by permission.

50. M. Thomas Thangaraj (1942–)

1. Ocean of love, fill us with love.
   Ocean of love, fill us with love.
   Ocean of love, fill us with love.
   Amen! Amen!

2. Fountain of joy, rise up in us.
   Fountain of joy, rise up in us.
   Fountain of joy, rise up in us.
   Amen! Amen!

3. Light of justice, shine in our lives.
   Light of justice, shine in our lives.
   Light of justice, shine in our lives.
   Amen! Amen!

Source: Global Praise I (1997) #50
"Ocean of Love" Words © 1996 M. Thomas Thangaraj, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308.

51. Swee Hong Lim (1963–)

1. How long, O God, will you hide your face?
   Confused and lost we stumble and fall.
   We need your hand to steady our pace,
   as we plod through the maze of life.

2. How long, O God, will evil prevail?
   Where harsh and cruel acts demean all.
   We long for peace and justice to reign,
   revealing wonder, joy, and love.

3. Emmanuel, God's gift has been given;
   rejected, crucified for us all.
   Such Love has shattered Death's fearsome grip,
   God's power has set the captives free.

Source: New Hymns of Hope (2016) #109
Words: Lim Swee Hong © 2016 Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream, IL 60188. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

52. Patrick Matsikenyiri (1937–)

(Shona): Jesu, tawa pano;
Jesu, tawa pano;
Jesu, tawa pano;
Jesu, tawa pano muzita renyu.

(English): Jesus, we are here;
Jesus, we are here;
Jesus, we are here;
Jesus, we are here for you.

Source: Africa Praise Hymnbook (1998) #1
"Jesu Tawa Pano" Words © 1990, 1996 Patrick Matsikenyiri, admin. General Board of Global Ministries t/a GBGMusik, 458 Ponce de Leon Ave., Atlanta, GA 30308. Copyright@umcmission.

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Given the complexities of this study, the multiple levels of subject material, and a desire to be as helpful as possible to the reader and researcher, this index is subdivided into four discrete areas: topics, names and places, titles of hymns/songs, and publications.

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